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THE EARL OF WILTON COMING A CROPPER WITH THE QUORN.
*From an oil-painting by G. H. LAPORTE. By permission of Messrs. Ackermann.
Laporte lived from 1799 to 1873.*

NIMROD'S HUNTING REMINISCENCES

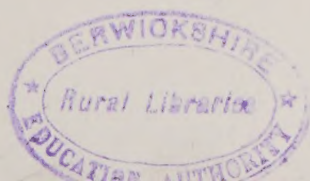
COMPRISING MEMOIRS OF MASTERS OF HOUNDS

NOTICES OF THE
CRACK RIDERS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
HUNTING COUNTRIES OF ENGLAND

By Apperley

*A NEW EDITION WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
W. SHAW SPARROW AND FIFTY-ONE ILLUS-
TRATIONS IN COLOUR, LINE AND HALF-TONE
AFTER JAMES SEYMOUR, THOMAS WEAVER, T.
WOODWARD, WILDRAKE, H. ALKEN, R. B. DAVIS,
HANCOCK, W. P. HODGES, J. RAMSAY, THOMAS
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THOMAS BEWICK*

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Introduction

I

THIS entertaining book was brought out by Rudolph Ackermann, from the Eclipse Sporting Gallery, Regent Street, London, in the year of Nimrod's death, 1843, and a brief preface related that "arrangements had been entered into which would have given to this work the advantages of the revising care of its Author, when Death suddenly transferred the task to one who feels how inefficiently he has performed his duty."

To see another man's work through the Press was responsible editing, but Nimrod's reminiscences were not new copy ; they had been tested serially under the several titles of *The Characters of Hunting Countries*, *The Crack Riders of England*, and *Memoirs of Masters of Hounds*. Nimrod, again, was not a negligent writer, and as attempts to improve work already finished have rarely been a real success, I am glad that his memories were not bepatched by after-thoughts coming from different emotions.

Was the text here and there altered by an editor? An editor was employed, though his name was not given, and the fifth paragraph of the original preface says :—

"The Reader, then, must in some measure transport himself back to the period at which the pen of that most ready of writers, Nimrod, traced out the events to which he here refers, since in many instances it was found utterly impossible to remodel the language so as to adapt it to the present time, and at the same time to preserve its distinctive character. . . ."

These ambiguous words should not have been published without explanation. Nimrod himself relates, in Chapter IX., p. 190, when writing of a veteran crack, Sir Henry Peyton, whom he had not seen for about a dozen years : "Driven from England by the proprietor of a sporting magazine which I was the making of, I can only now repeat what I hear, and this is, that when hounds run hard, this accomplished sportsman is still as near to them as he should be, and no more need be said." This passage proves, and there are a good many others like it, that Nimrod declined to use hearsay as first-hand evidence : and since through a

dozen years he was cut off from English hunting, he was more and more dependent on his recollections. In 1831 he fled to France rather than risk imprisonment for debt, and soon after his return to England he died in Upper Belgrave Place, Pimlico, on Derby Day, 1843.

His editor may have corrected some errors of date, and some other slips, but I detect no patches of another man's style. And this point is worth noting, as editors in those days were often a nuisance, even Carlyle suffering from their bad habit of "remodelling" contributors' accepted articles. To my mind there is no better book than Nimrod's reminiscences for two very important classes of sporting readers: namely, those who wish to make friends with the most notable cracks from the great Meynell's period to the beginning of the 1830's, and those who complete this enjoyment by extra-illustrating what they study with prints, autograph letters, and drawings.

To extra-illustrate a good book of hunting memories through some fifty years is a delightful exercise of original research, that will turn this reprint into three or four volumes. One of Nimrod's contemporaries, William Upcott, who in youth made notes from old George Stubbs's talk, was a great pioneer of extra-illustrating, so I think of it always as Upcotting. And if one thing more than any other in Nimrod's reminiscences fits them for Upcotting, it is the fact that they show very well how slow and formal hunting passed through increases of speed to the coming of railways. Nimrod feared railways, believing that they would be very bad for his favourite sport, fox-hunting. In Chapter X., p. 220, when speaking of Tom Smith's *Diary of a Huntsman*, he says: *

"Mr. Smith's chapter on hounds is the best in his book. It abounds in sensible, well-considered observations, which may be most useful to the rising generation, should fox-hunting last their time, of which at present there must be doubts in all reflecting minds. At all events, it is about to receive a severe blow and great discouragement in the combined effects of railroads, stag-hunting, and that abominably cruel and cocktail practice of steeplechasing."

From this fear of Nimrod's we look back across the years to about 1790, when as a boy less than twelve, "in a red coat and hat, like Puss-in-Boots," he saw hounds for the first time near Whitchurch, Shropshire, with Sir Richard Puleston, of Emral Park. In Chapter I. he speaks of the famous Salopian cracks, but when he does honour to William Childe, of Kinlet Hall, whom he describes "as having been one of the first to introduce the present spirited method

* Tom Smith of the Craven Hounds, whose hog-maned black mare was a very wonderful performer over a rough country. His *Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman*, with illustrations by the author, was published in 1838; 2nd edition, revised, 1841.

of riding to hounds," he overlooks a point in the history of the chase that is little known, though very remarkable and interesting. It was not Childe, nor any one else of Childe's period, but a sporting artist, James Seymour, who set the first example of straight riding accompanied by flying leaps!

So I give two illustrations to prove this point, together with the fact that James Seymour died in 1752, at the age of fifty, just four years before the birth of William Baldwyn, who took the name of Childe when he inherited from his mother (in 1770) the Kinlet estates in Shropshire. Seymour was a madcap sportsman as well as a forerunner of Henry Alken, and it is quite likely that it was he himself who took "A Flying Leap over a Five-Bar Gate," and another "Flying Leap over a Rivulet," at a time when timber was taken with a standing jump, and when leaps of every sort were careful and mild.

Note the intensive movement in the leap across water. It recalls to memory two water-jumps in Nimrod's reminiscences. Mytton performs one of them, and in cold blood, leaping his one-eyed hunter, Baronet, over such a wide brook that he covered some inches more than nine yards from hind-foot to hind-foot! Yet the other historic water-jump is even *wider*, spanning a full ten yards in all, over the Belvoir brook, the crack riders being Mr. Wing (a great yeoman grazier) and Lord Forester. Remember these feats of horsemanship when you look at Seymour's pioneer print.

John Wootton's pictures have in them no jump in the least like James Seymour's, and he lived till 1765. In his large canvas of "The Death," at Althorp, Wootton shows us how Colonel Fielding takes a standing jump over a low rail, his whip and body displaying much excitement, and his hunter rising up on the hind legs like a chariot horse in a piece of old sculpture. George Stubbs, too, in a very notable picture of hunting portraits at Goodwood, portrays how another British officer, General Jones, takes his horse over a four-bar gate in a sort of buck-jump. To find something rather akin to Seymour's leaping we must turn to an etched print by a Belgian artist in England, Peter Tillemans, who died from chronic asthma in 1734. Here the gate has five bars, and the rider loses his hat, though the leap he takes isn't a genuine flying one, like Seymour's.

That William Childe had a great deal to do with the genesis of fast riding is certainly true, and not in hunting alone. As early as the 1780's—either just before, or soon after, Osbaldeston's birth—Childe wagered with some of his sporting friends that he would ride from London to Kinlet, a distance of about 170 miles, in a dozen hours, galloping the whole way, and aided by relays of horses that awaited him on the road. And he won his bet without pausing to take either food or drink, sucking a cherrystone to keep his mouth from

becoming parched. When within six miles of Kinlet he was nearly defeated by Old Bewdley Bridge over the Severn. An arch of this bridge—as a drawing by Farington tells me—had been repaired with timber, and when Childe reached it he found that a very high flood had made a gap in the footway, wide enough to trouble his tiring horse. But he got across with a great effort, and reached home in pretty good fettle. How many better rides are there in history?

On the Clee Hills, called Titterstones, in Salop, William Childe used to surprise the natives, as Nimrod relates, “by the rapidity with which he would gallop down the sides of this hill, 1600 feet above the level, amidst very large stones; but he always asserted that a horse which had free command of his legs, would never fall on such ground, *provided the rider gave him his head*, to enable him to see the ground”; “the position of his haunches was his security”; but we are not told that any sportsman but Childe had nerve and hand to try the adventure.

When Childe invaded the Quorn country, where he startled and annoyed his friend Hugo Meynell, he became known as “The Flying Childe,” a human variant of Flying Childers, and soon a very gallant set of young sportsmen copied his rapid and straight methods, taking Meynell away from his own improvement of Georgian hunting. These matters are touched upon in Chapter V., where you will find, too, a funny account of the way in which William Childe eluded too much drink while his companions were passing through toasts into tipsiness.

There are writers who have overstated the pace at which the Childeians—Lord Belgrave, Cecil Forester, George Villiers (fifth Earl of Jersey), Tom Cholmondeley, Mr. Musters, Mr. Orbe Hunter, Lord Charles Sackville-Germain, and his cousin, the third Duke of Dorset—prepared the way for the ever-famous Billesdon Coplow Run of 28 miles, which occurred in the last year of Hugo Meynell’s mastership, 1800, February 24, soon after William Childe had quitted Melton. A good historian has said about fast riding, soon attended by its corollary, fast hunting :

“The evolution was but a gradual one, since its progress had to depend to a great extent upon the marked improvement that subsequently took place in the surface condition of the best hunting countries. As Mr. Childe found the latter, the pace at which he went—the best possible pace in the circumstances—would present, in comparison with that attained by our modern first-flight men, no closer similitude than that attained by the crack stage coaches of seventy years ago and the fastest express train of to-day . . .” *

* H. G. Archer in *Baily’s Magazine*, April, 1899, p. 248.



The Hunter taking a Flying Leap over a Rivulet.
(Printed for Rob^t Dyer, opposite White Lane, Fleet Street.)

From a Print after JAMES SEYMOUR, 1702-52.
 One of the Two earliest examples of the Flying Leap.



J. Seymour pinx't

The HUNTER taking a Flying Leap, over a FIVE-BAR GATE.

Printed for Gunglton & Bowles, Map & Print-seller in St. Pauls Church-yard, London.

*From a Print after JAMES SEYMOUR, 1702-1752.
One of the Two earliest examples of the Flying Leap.*

All that Nimrod says in his reminiscences about the surface characteristics of the countries he knew intimately is very valuable, but he does not blow his own trumpet even half enough, either as a crack rider or as a very good influence in necessary reforms. So let me quote a piece of just praise from Surtees, published in 1846 :

“ The condition of hunters was certainly not generally understood, or perhaps attended to, until about twenty years ago, when ‘ Nimrod ’ essayed his letters on the subject. We do not mean to say that large first-rate establishments were ignorant of the subject, but certainly tired, stopping, and dying horses were much more common before he wrote than they have been since. . . . ”

At the end of Chapter II. Nimrod quotes from a friend, whose name he withholds, the story of a crack run in Leicestershire, from Fleckney Gorse, that ends in the death of a fine young hunter, a five-year-old named Edwin. You will feel throughout that Edwin was his rider's superior in all good points of character.

II

THAT Nimrod “ made ” many a hunter and then sold the animal at a big price we all know, and we learn from him that he was only a boy when he sold his first mount—a little horse called Hero—to the Rev. John Vennor, receiving only £28. Vennor was one of the best men over Warwickshire in the early part of Mr. Corbet's reign, and he distinguished himself particularly on his cheap little horse of very high form. Nimrod sold Hero in a hurry after an accident. This variety of dealing was a part of Nimrod's livelihood, and he was interested by other cracks, whether gentlemen or yeomen, who made hunters and sold them profitably. The higher the price the better he was pleased. In his praise of the yeomen who were sportsmen Nimrod was a real innovator among writers on hunting, and I like to connect it with the fact that we owe the types of yeoman that he singled out for special praise to the wisdom of Henry VII., who, as Bacon said, saw clearly that “ if a State ran most to noblemen and gentlemen, and the husbandmen and ploughmen be but as their workfolks or labourers, or else mere cottagers, which are but housed beggars, you may have a good cavalry, but never good stable bands of foot ” ; so Henry set himself to establish a middle class on the land, men of some substance and able to keep hinds and servants.

Let us think of and remember the yeoman grazier of Leicestershire, as he was

before the Napoleonic Wars had afflicted him with bad times. Then "it was grateful to the eye of a sportsman to behold his prosperous condition. "He had generally four, or often more, good hunters in his stable, and his domestic comforts were usually on a par with his stud. Since the days of Meynell he has been highly respected at the cover-side, and to persons of his class is the fox-hunting of Leicestershire very powerfully indebted, the preservation of foxes being chiefly in their hands, in consequence of the small number of large landed proprietors taking any interest in fox-hunting. There are, however, your Oldacres, your Thomlins, your Heycocks, and many others whose pockets have stood proof against the ruin which has overwhelmed their neighbours, but the shock has been too severe for most of them, and their means must be greatly diminished."

"The great Meynell generally paid the graziers the compliment of giving them half an hour's law when he knew that there was a fair in the neighbourhood."*

Sporting books are alive with social history when readers wish to find it, as they can easily in *Nimrod*; and another good thing in *Nimrod's* memories, a *flair* for journalism, makes him eager to note anything uncommon, such as a cork-legged whipper-in, or an excellent hunter completely blind, or a daring rider with only one arm, like Captain Harvey, a Waterloo hero, or the sporting tailor of Cheltenham, named Hastings, who did amazing things on foot with Lord Segrave's hounds, and also with the Duke of Beaufort's. Never before or since has any sportsman found in his own body and pluck such a first-rate Shanks' pony! When Lord Segrave offered this runner a good situation as earth-stopper Hastings answered: "I couldn't stop earths o' nights and hunt o' days too." So he declined to be a new sort of *warren* Hastings! Has England ever had a better sportsman than this tailor?†

Some flashes of criticism in this book should be noted with great care, for *Nimrod* was not generally free to speak with sharp candour. As a professional writer in the field he would have been useless to the *Sporting Magazine* if he had made foes instead of friends; so he was obliged to be discreet. Take his attitude towards Osbaldeston. In *Nimrod's Hunting Tours* it is always entertaining, but indecisive. We feel that something is left unsaid, and that it is very important. What this hidden something is we discover in *Nimrod's* reminiscences, Chapter II. It is this: that Osbaldeston was not a great M.O.F.; that it was Tom Sebright,

* See Chapter I. See also *Nimrod's* anecdotes of English sporting yeomen in Chapter IV., where an excellent character-sketch is given of Jerry Hawkins, pp. 91, 92.

† The *New Sporting Magazine* published his portrait and a biography, vol. vi. See *Nimrod's* account of Hastings in Chapter IV.

afterwards in the service of Earl Fitzwilliam, who laid the foundation of Osbaldeston's fame, both in the kennel and in the field ; and again, that for some seasons after Sebright left him Osbaldeston needed Tom's assistance in the field when difficulties presented themselves beyond his own mark. Little by little Osbaldeston improved greatly, but often it was said that the Squire, in his passion for hunting hounds, never made but one fatal mistake, and it was by failing to keep Sebright as his huntsman. If the Squire had bred the hounds, and Sebright had hunted them, perfection would have been attained, critics appeared to believe.

Osbaldeston hadn't enough self-control to be a great master of hounds. As soon as trying hitches came there was trouble with him. "His zealous temper could not brook a succession of those casualties which will arise in fox-hunting, so many causes producing them, and it too often happened that when he lost his temper he lost his fox." Can a criticism be sharper pointed than this one ?

The Peter Pan in Osbaldeston was always a spoilt child.

The large number of sporting cracks who hunted foxes in England, with Osbaldeston, whilst Europe was grappling her way to Waterloo, is another very notable thing in these memories. When you come upon a sporting officer who has been wounded at Waterloo, you will be amazed. But the act of shirking national service was not regarded as an offence in the days of sailing ships and no telegrams, probably because distant events were really distant then. News came imperfectly, also at long intervals of weeks or months ; and confidence in the sea as a protection acted like a narcotic on vast numbers of British minds. Happily, a great many good fellows did unite sport with war, and more hunting men should have been among them. Wellington had a pack of hounds in the Peninsula, and Nimrod speaks of his huntsman.

So great was the passion for hunting in those days that a gentleman named Shaw, a Yorkshireman, who was crippled with gout, rode through six seasons with Lord Derby's hounds, on a splendid horse called Comet. He was lifted into his saddle, and, though chalk stones were working out of his hands, he rode as hard as any man in the field.* Note, too, from chapter to chapter, what hunters had to bear in those hard-drinking days from heavyweight sportsmen. Osbaldeston himself, a small man, rode twelve stone with his saddle, and we rise stone by stone in this book not to eighteen stone only, but even to a mighty man who sat a full twenty stone in his saddle, and of whom it was said at Melton, *No man can beat Tom Edge for twenty minutes !* He had three hunters with a far-travelling reputation, Remus, Banker, and Gayman. Another huge crack rider, Henry Wyatt of Warwickshire, six feet three inches high, was a "fifteen-stunner," and

* The Hon. Samuel Ongley was another gouty crack.

Nimrod admits that "the casualties of his stable were considerable," as "every now and then *smashing* was the order of the day." If a horse with a touch of genius in him wanted to raise his price in the market, he could do it by carrying Wyatt through a run.

III

IT has been said of Nimrod that he did not follow with steady enough attention the artistic aspects of hunting, in pictures, and prints, and drawings. No doubt he missed a great many opportunities. If he had made friends with Henry Alken, for example, and had written the story of this sporting artist to the year 1840, he would have made a lasting hit. Alken is not mentioned even once by name throughout these reminiscences, and only four sporting artists are named—Ferneley, one of the Sartoriuses, Loraine Smith, Morland's friend, and the great George Stubbs, whom he misunderstands. Ferneley is named a good many times, and always with enthusiasm. There are three veiled references to Sir Robert Frankland, an amateur artist of merit, like Loraine Smith; but why Frankland is not named, either here or in Nimrod's *Hunting Tours*, I cannot guess.

In June, 1811, Sir Robert issued a challenge to the young Ben Tally Ho, not yet known as Henry Alken. The challenge was a set of six Meltonian hunting prints in colours, called *Indispensable Accomplishments*: 1. "Going along at a Slapping Pace"; 2. "Topping a Flight of Rails"; 3. "Charging an Ox Fence"; 4. "Going in and out Clever"; 5. "Facing a Brook"; and 6. "Swishing at a Rasper."

Nimrod's references are to Plates 1 and 4. As regards Plate 4, "Going in and out Clever," we are told that "the figure delineated . . . was intended for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and is an excellent representation of his person and seat."

In September, 1815, Henry Alken answered Sir Robert Frankland's challenge, bringing out a set of seven aquatints in colour under the title *Qualified Horses and Unqualified Riders, or the Reverse of Sporting Phrases taken from the Work entitled "Indispensable Accomplishments."* It is a clever duel in sporting art, and recently the two sets of prints, beautifully bound together, were catalogued at £60. There is a foreword, partly in verse, by both artists, and the text under Alken's plates is pointed, as it is in his amusing Real M. (*i.e.* Real Meltonian) set. The fourth plate is called "Got in and Getting Out."

One reference by Nimrod, the second one (p. 29), says of the Frankland set :

“The post-and-rail fence, however, required an accomplished hunter, and the ‘going in and out clever’ formed a subject for a print very fresh in our recollections, and most admirably delineated by the artist. Mr. Lindow ‘going a slapping pace on the Clipper’ also formed one of the set of those admirable sketches, and I always lament there is not some well-skilled pencil at work on those scenes each succeeding year. I am quite certain the artist would be very well paid for his trouble, provided he knew what he was about.”

Excellent advice for present-day hunting men and sporting artists ! Why shouldn't there be an illustrated annual on riding to hounds in every crack county ? England is as rich to-day as she ever was in capable sporting artists, Charles Simpson's book on *Leicestershire and Its Hunts, The Quorn, The Cottesmore and the Belvoir*, being among the proofs of this pleasant fact, like the fine sportsmanship in art of Lionel Edwards.

In his final words Nimrod says : “A slow man with hounds, how good soever his horsemanship, is little thought of in these days. Quickness is the characteristic of the modern horseman, and I have noticed only a few slow ones. I have also omitted many fast ones because they have not come under my personal observation ; and so Farewell.”

WALTER SHAW SPARROW.

Nimrod's Hunting Reminiscences



WILLIAM CHILDE, OF KINLET HALL, SHROPSHIRE,
1756-1824. He helped to introduce Straight Riding
and Fast Hunting, like JAMES SEYMOUR, 1702-1752.
From a woodcut by F. BABBAGE after a portrait at Kinlet.



CHAPTER I



HERE is oftentimes as much pleasure in looking back as forward ; and a lively recollection of the persons and performances of some of our first-rate sportsmen, contributes to the cheerfulness of many of my passing hours. Thus it has occurred to me, that I may transfer to the Sporting World, some portion of this self-gratification, as well as amuse some leisure moments by inditing short notices of the various eminent sportsmen who have come under my eye—whether as riders to hounds—or as masters of fox-hounds, and huntsmen ; as likewise of a few of those who have filled *inferior* situations in the various departments of “ the noble science.”

I make no apology for doing this. Any man who excels in the station in which he is placed, is entitled to commendation, and—in allusion to that part of the sportsman’s prowess, *riding to hounds*—as we have greater reason to look for quickness of perception, coolness under difficulties, anticipation of events, self-command, and above all a light hand and a firm seat, together with the other essentials to a good horseman, in a person of a superior caste in life,

we should set a higher value on a happy combination of such qualities when we find it in a servant, or indeed in any one who has not had the advantages which we have ourselves possessed. Such is the outline of my intended offering to the sporting world, and I will throw off at once in my native county, Shropshire.

Shropshire is one of the largest of our English counties, being about fifty miles in length, and nearly as much in breadth ; it is surrounded by three Welsh, and four English counties, so that it is scarcely necessary to state that its surface presents every variety of feature, and every description of soil ; on the whole, it is pretty well cultivated, holds a fair rank among the provincials as a field for fox-hounds, and is celebrated for its breed of horses, whilst every man in it, who has the means, is a sportsman, fox-hunting being the favourite diversion ; although the shooter, the courser, and the fisherman, have all signal opportunities of amusing themselves.

Shropshire—that is to say in its various parts—has been hunted by the following persons, several of whom have held conspicuous situations in the sporting world, namely : the late Earl of Stamford ; the Hon. Noel Hill, afterwards Lord Berwick, whose country extended from ten miles below Shrewsbury, to Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, a distance of upwards of seventy miles ! the late much renowned Mr. Childe, of Kinlet Hall, near Cleobury-Mortimer, who is celebrated as having been one of the first to introduce the present spirited method of riding to hounds, and who was a friend of the great Meynell ; the late very noted Mr. Forester, of Willey Park, near Broseley, uncle to the late Lord ; the late equally celebrated Mr. Corbet, of Sundorne Castle, near Shrewsbury, who so long hunted Warwickshire ; the late Mr. Richard Dansey, of Easton Court, near Ludlow, father of the gentleman of that name who afterwards hunted Nottinghamshire ; the late Sir John Hill, Bart., of Hawkestone, near Hodnot, the father of heroes and sportsmen, and one of the best sportsmen of his own day ; the late Colonel John Hill, eldest son of Sir John, a very scientific man with hounds, and one of the best horsemen in England ; Sir Richard Puleston, of Emral Park, near Whitchurch, with whom I first saw hounds ; Sir Edward Smythe, Bart., of Acton Burnell Park ; the late Colonel Cook, author of “ Observations on Fox-Hunting ; ” Mr. I. Cressett Pelham, then M.P. for the county ; Mr. Boycott, of Rudge Hall, near Shiffnal ; Mr. Walter Giffard, of Chillington Hall, near Wolverhampton ; the late Mr. Mytton, of Halston, Sir Edward Smythe, Mr. Smythe Owen, of Condoover Hall, near Shrewsbury, and Mr. Lloyd, of Aston, near Oswestry ; which three gentlemen, conjointly, assumed the direction of what is termed the Shropshire country, when resigned by Sir Bellingham Graham. The Ludlow side of the country was likewise hunted some twenty years or so back, by two scratch packs ; one kept by the late Mr. Adams, of Ludlow, a solicitor ; the other a subscription

pack, at the head of which was a yeoman by the name of Aston, of Botterill Aston, near Bridgenorth, a good sportsman, and a good workman in the saddle over a very rough country. It was of this pack, called the Wrickton hounds, that the late Mr. Forester, of Willey,—one of the old school of fox-hunters,—made an answer, so truly in character with the man, to the question, “ *whether he approved of them ?* ” having been out with them a few years previously to his decease at a very advanced age ; “ *Very much, sir,*” said he ; “ *I did not see one d—d fellow in white top-boots among the whole field ; depend upon it they are sportsmen.*”

Before we throw off our hounds in this sporting country, we will take one cast around it, and look at it with the eyes of the general sportsman, as well as of the devoted fox-hunter, who holds most other pastimes cheap. The fisherman is quite at home in Shropshire ; independently of the Severn, which contains twenty-two sorts of fish, the Teme and Corve, so celebrated for their grayling, and the Perry for its trout, there are some as fine lakes as any midland county can produce. Those of Ellesmere, Whitemere, and Colemere, cover nearly three hundred acres of ground, and abound in the finest pike ; at Sir Edward Smythe’s, at Acton Burnell, is a magnificent piece of water, covering twenty-five acres, and the lakes of Hawkestone, Walcot, and Marton, are of very considerable extent. The three meres above mentioned, are great ornaments to the country, and they are all to be seen from the high road to Chester ; they are elegantly bordered by well cultivated banks, and although none of them are the parents of streams, yet the supply from springs keeps them always full. In the preserved waters of Mr. Knight, of Downton Castle, near Ludlow, and at the small village of Lentwardine, just in the county of Hereford, is the best grayling fishing in England.

The courser has always had an opportunity of trying the speed and stoutness of his kennel in Shropshire. Previously to the enclosure of Morfe Forest, near Bridgenorth, the Morfe club showed excellent sport, and now and then produced a dog that rivalled the best blood of the south. This celebrated ground, once a chase having deer, has long since been disafforested, and was enclosed in 1815, giving between five and six thousand acres of enclosed land ; it is, however, still good coursing ground, and well stocked with hares. There are many large preserves of game in Shropshire, and also much wild shooting for *sportsmen*, from its vicinity to the Welsh hills ; it is likewise, particularly on the Shiffnal side, very celebrated as partridge ground. I am anything but an advocate of battues, and unlimited slaughter of game, by which everything in the character of sporting is swamped ; but as a chronicler of sporting events, it may not be amiss to mention one day’s shooting in Shropshire, as perhaps it was seldom if ever exceeded in the very hot-bed of game. The late Mr. Mytton and Mr. W. Giffard, his brother-in-

law, left the house at Halston, at ten o'clock in the forenoon of a very wet and short day in December ; and between that hour and dinner, shot 430 head of game ; 333 of which were pheasants. It was for a bet of 100 sovs. ; and the contending party killed 424 head, *all in the Halston preserves ! !*

It is to be regretted that the county of Salop, as it is called, is not more favourable than it is to fox-hunting, because there is no county in England where the " noble science " is more respected and encouraged. Perhaps among the higher order of its inhabitants there are more sportsmen,—at all events, more well-wishers to sport,—than most of our shires can boast : but of one fact we may assure ourselves, there never was a body of men more truly friendly to fox-hunting, and indeed to all other field sports, than the Shropshire yeomen are ; and until crippled, as they have of late years been, by bad times, almost every man of them took the field. I do not forget Stephen Matthews on his black mare, and a few more of " the zealous boys," as Sir Bellingham Graham called them, *particularly after a certain hour of the day*. I remember also, being particularly gratified by the excellent feeling that subsisted between tenant and landlord ; so long as this feeling lasts, nothing can destroy England, and I do not hesitate to assert, that nothing tends more to keep it alive, than our various sports of the field, in which an unceremonious intercourse exists between the higher orders and their inferiors, engendering mutual admiration and respect.

Shropshire has long been celebrated for its horses, having produced more good hunters than any other county (Yorkshire I suppose excepted) in England : this arises from two causes ; in the first place, the yeomanry have always been distinguished for their very sporting character, and in the next, they have been fortunate in their stallions. A horse called the Hundred-house Snap, a descendant of Snap, by Snip, and full of Arabian blood, covered many years in the county, and his blood is by no means extinct ; the late Lord Forester used to swear by the Snap horses, which for stoutness in their work and good constitutions in the stable, were, he said, excelled by none ; then there were several others very nearly as good ; there was old Revenge, by Marske, out of Figurante by Regulus, and bred in the neighbouring county ; also Tommy, by Wildair, out of a Syphon mare, her dam by Blank, the produce of each, as stout as steel. Warwickshire men will remember Will. Barrow's two splendid chesnuts, one by Revenge, and the other by Tommy ! a horse called Collier's Grey, on account of his being the property of a person of that name at Ludlow, was likewise a capital stallion for hunters in early days, as was a horse called Minister, bred by Mr. Vernon of Hilton : all this good old blood I consider to have laid the foundation of the excellence of Shropshire horses, and the acquisition of Sultan, who also covered many years in the county, has

been the means of preserving it. The Sultans have not generally proved handsome, but are very stout in the field, and for the most part make excellent hunters ; since Sultan's time, however, there have been many good stallions introduced, and Shropshire horses are still in high repute. It is somewhat extraordinary, but no less true, that all dealers who have been accustomed to purchase Shropshire horses, declare that they excel all other country-bred horses for keeping up their condition ; and I well know that the principal London dealers have always persons on the look out for horses bred in Shropshire.

I will commence with the worst part, and so proceed to the best. The Ludlow side of the county of Salop is extremely rough and unfavourable for hounds, abounding in hills, deserving the title of mountains, and woods almost amounting to forests ; one part of it, however, deserves notice from the peculiar method of hunting it ; we allude to the *fastnesses* on the Clee-hills, called Titterstones, where the foxes are stopped out by fires lighted at the mouths of them in the night.* Although the surrounding country is extremely rough and difficult, this is an interesting meet in the spring, as the fox is hunted from his earth, which he is forced to leave, by the drag, at an early hour of the morning, and generally jumps up in view. Mr. Childe of Kinlet hunted this place when he kept fox-hounds, and used to surprise the natives by the rapidity with which he would gallop down the sides of this hill, 1600 feet above the level, amidst very large stones ; but he always asserted that a horse which had free command of his legs, would never fall on such ground, *provided the rider gave him his head*, to enable him to see his ground ; he said the position of his haunches was his security, but it is not every one, who, like himself, has nerve and hand to try the experiment.

The well known Will. Barrow, many years huntsman to Mr. Corbet's hounds, in Warwickshire, whipped in to Mr. Childe at the time I am alluding to, and I have heard him tell of this exploit of Mr. Childe ; I have also heard him speak of the riot his hounds were subjected to on these Clee Hills, by the little black sheep which are depastured there jumping up before them, in view.

This part of Shropshire, however, is a capital test of horseflesh. If a horse will carry a man from the Titterstone-Clee Hills, over the Brown Clee Hill to Kinlet Hall or Apley Castle on one side, or to Wenlock-edge, on the other, with a good fox and a good scent, he may be pronounced fit to go in any country under the sun, as he will encounter every kind of soil, every variation of ground, and every description of fence. In fact, to keep his legs, he must possess the activity of a cat,—and his rider must not be shy.

* Strange to say, several bitch-foxes, who have laid up their cubs in these subterranean places, have darted through the fires made at their mouths, and in defiance of the shouts of the men attending them.

On the northern side of Ludlow, bordering on Herefordshire, is a fairish country for hounds, but very difficult for horses, as the vales, which are narrow and deep, are very strongly fenced, and hills everywhere abound.

In short, a fox found near Ludlow sometimes shows a run of a very extraordinary character. He quits a very highly cultivated country at a very short notice, and leads his pursuers over mountains,—the Longmynd, for instance—scarcely inferior to the Welsh. This, with part of Herefordshire, was the country hunted by the late Mr. Dansey, and afterwards by Mr. Adams of Ludlow. Mr. Dansey was a sportsman of the old school—a great friend of the late Mr. Forester of Willey, and partook of some of the eccentricities of that renowned sportsman. In his dress, he affected the style and costume of the plain English yeoman, but he was a noble specimen of a man in his general appearance, which was commanding ; and he was a most faithful representation of a true-born John Bull. Perhaps the following anecdote, given by a friend, may present a true picture of this sportsman, as far as his toilet was concerned. My friend was on one side of a thick hedge, and Mr. Dansey on the other, but not visible to him. Mr. Dansey having dismounted to do something to his saddle, his horse was unwilling that he should mount him again, and a hearty oath or two was the consequence, for the hounds were finding their fox at the moment. At length—for he was heavy, and inclined to be corpulent—he seized a favourable opportunity for a spring, and found himself well seated in his saddle. But a lamentable disaster occurred. In the act of accomplishing this feat, *crack* went his braces in the middle and down went his *breeks*. “There by G—d,” said he to himself, “there’s a pretty job ; *I’ve only taken to wear braces six weeks, and I’ll bet a guinea I lose my breeches before we kill this fox.*”

Mr. Dansey was a very superior sportsman, and had one of the finest and most musical pipes for a view holloa I ever remember to have heard. He could make those large Shropshire and Herefordshire woodlands ring with his voice, from one end to the other of them, and his style of encouraging hounds in their work was delightful to the ear of a sportsman—*very much à la Musters*, who, I am certain, would have been gratified by having a sight of him. In society also, he was most amusing, having the high animal spirits of a school boy ; but he died before he was fifty, a martyr, perhaps, to those temptations which so few of us are able altogether to resist.

Mr. Dansey was a good horseman, and a still better judge of a hunter—often selling one for a good round sum. I remember him telling an excellent anecdote of his having sold one called *Jupiter* for five hundred guineas—a very large sum “by Jupiter” in those days—to a gentleman who forgot to pay for him. After several unsuccessful applications, he hit on the following expedient. He went to

his house, and sat himself down in the kitchen. Now, said he, *here I am*, till I get my money. I don't want your fine made-dishes, but here is plenty of bacon in the rack, and lots of perry-washings* in the pantry, and I shall do very well for a fortnight or three weeks to come! The threat had the desired effect, and the payment for Jupiter followed. Such, indeed, was the strength of Mr. Dansey's constitution at that time, that he would no doubt have performed his promise, for no man, not even John Lockley, thought less of sleep than he did. It was nothing uncommon with him to go to his hounds from the festive board, without looking at his bed, but the strongest frame—and his was adamant—is not proof against such daring encroachments.

Had he taken as much care of himself, as Lockley did of his equally fine frame, Mr. Dansey might probably have lived to an equal age.

The Ludlow country was subsequently hunted by a subscription pack, called the Ludlow hounds, under the direction of the late Mr. Adams, of that place, a solicitor, and for many years owner of a very strong pack of harriers, for which that part of Shropshire is better fitted than for fox-hounds,—not being roomy enough for fox-hunting, exclusive of other inconveniences. Mr. Adams was a good sportsman, and I say this from practical observation of him in the field, having hunted with him a good deal at various periods during the four or five years I resided in the neighbourhood of Ludlow. He had a practice in his kennel, however, which I could not approve of, viz., that he did not boil his flesh, and pursued the very old custom, when a horse was killed for the kennel, of letting his hounds have a bellyful of the offal.

Considering the extreme roughness of the greater part of his country, Mr. Adams showed very good sport, and his huntsman, John —— (I forget his surname) had nearly the best hand on his horse my eyes ever beheld. And as a specimen of his country, I will relate an anecdote. On my return from Warwickshire, where I always hunted in those days after the first week in November, I was accosted by my next neighbour, a right good sportsman, with “you should have been with us last Monday”—describing a run over a great extent of country fitted for anything rather than fox-hunting. “Who had the best of it?” said I, fancying myself in Warwickshire, where such a question would have been asked. “I think the boy upon the *mule*,” was my friend's reply. Now I doubt not the correctness of his opinion. Mr. Adams's whipper-in, a very clever boy, rode a still cleverer mule; in fact, he could all but climb a tree, and therefore could frequently go where horses could not.

The Ludlow country adjoins the Shiffnal country, to which we will now proceed,

* Perry-washings—a sort of inferior perry, which that county abounds with, and a favourite beverage with Mr. D.

and, although not very favourable to scent, the soil being for the most part too light, I do not hesitate to pronounce it the most gentleman-like part of Shropshire for fox-hunting, and, in some parts of it, capable of showing many good runs in the season.

This country has occasionally been used as an auxiliary to others. For example, Sir Richard Puleston hunted it with his home country. Sir Bellingham Graham hunted it in 1823, and in 1824 he also had it with the Atherstone country, and used to hunt it for six weeks at a time at two periods of the season, having his kennel at Ivetsy Bank, on the old West Chester road. Mr. Mytton did the same, and used the same kennel when he had his fox-hounds at Halston, also hunting a small country near home. Colonel Cook likewise hunted it ; as also did Mr. Osbaldeston when he had the Atherstone. It then became a regular, detached hunting country, taken with a subscription by Mr. Boycott ; and as such we will proceed to look at it.

Mr. Boycott was not a master of fox-hounds previously to his taking to this country, but was very well known as a sportsman, though better perhaps as a good rider to hounds.

Here, indeed, he has been conspicuous, and particularly so—the best test of horsemanship, by the bye—for being in a good place on a middling horse. But we must do him the justice to say he has had many good ones, and sold several hunters, at large prices. Gentlemen huntsmen, however, being in fashion in his time, Mr. Boycott performed the office himself, assisted by two good whippers-in, and showed very fair sport—quite as good indeed as could be looked for in a country like his, from a new master of hounds, and all the accompanying disadvantages. His kennel was at his own seat, at Rudge Hall, about seven miles from Shiffnal, on the Bridgenorth side, and he hunted three days a week, throughout the season. His pack was composed of a strong body of hounds which he purchased of a Mr. Nunn, near Colchester, and of drafts, of course, from others. His health declining, caused him to give up the hounds, but, to the last he was a difficult man to beat on his old white horse.

This country is now no longer called the Shiffnal, but the Albrighton country, the kennel being removed to a village called Albrighton, on the Wolverhampton side.

The Albrighton country is very narrow, commencing near Cannock, in the neighbourhood of Mr. Littleton's and Lord Anglesey's, and stretching into Worcestershire, on the Stourbridge side ; these points may be said to bound its length. Those denoting its width may be called Wolverhampton town and Newport.

The pleasantest part of Shropshire, although not the most favourable to hounds in their work, is the country I am now speaking of. There are a few fixtures in it which can show fine runs, with no obstacles to going on with a good flying fox, which cannot be said of the greater part of Shropshire. For instance, the Lizard,

between Shiffnal and Newport, the property of the Earl of Bradford ; Snowdon-pool * ; Patshull (Sir G. Pigot's) ; High Onn Wood ; Tongrough ; Brewood Park ; Chillington ; Woodcote Park (Mr. Coates's) ; Sheriff Hales ; Bishop's Wood ; Boscobel ; Mr. Botfield's cover ; the Manor Rough ; Mr. Slaney's gorse ; Ryton gorse (Mr. R. Molyneux's) ; Wrottesley covers (Sir John Wrottesley's), near Wolverhampton ; Rudge Heath and gorse (Mr. Boycott's) ; the Ran-dans (Worcestershire) ; Gatacre Park ; Davenport House ; Envile (Lord Stamford's) ; Dudmaston ; Whitty Moor, &c., &c. On the Bridge-north side, likewise, are some good wild fixtures ; such as Apley Castle (Mr. Whitmore's) ; Stanleys (Sir Tyrwhit Jones's) ; Morf Forest ; Pudsey's gorse. White Ladies is another of the Albrighton fixtures. Within a mile of it is a place celebrated in ancient history as having been the refuge of the unfortunate Charles after the battle of Worcester ; and in modern times, as, for more than forty years, the residence of one of our first sportsmen—the late John Lockley.

The subscription to the Albrighton hounds being on rather a limited scale, admits of no unnecessary display.

What is generally termed “the field” is not numerous in the Albrighton country, seldom exceeding fifteen or twenty red coats, and perhaps a score of others of divers shades, not excluding *black*. Among the principal attendants on the Albrighton in my time were the following :—Mr. Holyoake (father of the Leicestershire flyer) ; Colonel Horton, an excellent sportsman, and always in a good place ; Messrs. Horden, Wrottesley, and Pigott ; the two Messrs. Eytons, of Wellington ; Mr. St. John Charlton ; Mr. John Aston, an old and zealous sportsman ; Mr. Boycott ; Mr. Evans, of Wolverhampton, renowned for the *condition* of his horses, and consequently for the good prices he has received for them ; Mr. Botfield, of Decker Hill ; Mr. Gatacre, of Gatacre ; Mr. Charles Whitmore, a zealous sportsman ; Sir Thomas Boughey, the best mounted man in the country ; Messrs. Jasper, Bedford, Jones, and Wright, good men over a country ; Mr. Slaney, then M.P. for Shrewsbury, and his brother, occasional attendants on these hounds—the former hunting chiefly with the Shropshire hounds, and the latter residing in London, but now and then making his appearance on a good one ; Mr. Smith, of Badger, never missing a day ; Mr. Charles Giffard, a lively boy in the field ; *cum multis aliis*—too numerous to mention.

Having named the Messrs. Eyton, it may not be amiss to give a good anecdote of Mr. Charles Eyton. Coming up one day to the Hatton Brook (no trifle at any part of it), as the hounds were drawing over the country, some one sang out that

* Sir Bellingham Graham found fifteen foxes in sixteen days' draw, in this cover, when Mr. R. Slaney had it.

there was a ford close at hand. "So much the better," said he; "but my horse has *seen* the brook, and he will be quite uncomfortable for the rest of the evening if I don't let him jump it; so *here goes!*" Another good anecdote is related respecting the establishment of the Albrighton packs, when Mr. Giffard succeeded Mr. Boycott. He purchased Mr. Dansey's pack, when that gentleman relinquished Herefordshire, as Mr. Boycott was desirous that his hounds should go to a distant country. He consented, however, that a few couples of them should be offered to Mr. Giffard, provided the selection was made by a *stranger*. The stranger appeared; and having selected the very best hounds in the pack, Mr. Boycott declared off, protesting against playing any longer at that game!

The principal part of Shropshire, as a hunting country, is occupied by what are called the Shropshire hounds; but it has for many years past been but very irregularly hunted—indeed, for several seasons without any hounds at all. It was, however, at last taken by J. Cressett Pelham, Esq., of Cound Hall, near Shrewsbury. The eccentricity of Mr. Pelham's character is too well known to need remark; neither is it necessary to add that as a man of honour and a gentleman it stands high everywhere. But I believe I may state without the chance of contradiction, that eccentricity of character, and the management of a pack of fox-hounds, accord but ill. The man to shine here is your straight-forward, plain-dealing, matter-of-fact man, firm in purpose, and still firmer in action. Of Mr. Pelham, then, as a master of hounds, I have not much to say; but the thanks of sportsmen are always due to a gentleman who hunts a country so long as Mr. Pelham hunted Shropshire, all at his own cost. Mr. Pelham was succeeded by Sir Edward Smythe, Bart., of Acton Burnell Hall, near Shrewsbury, a sportsman of many years' standing, and very popular among the Salopians.

In 1823, the gentlemen resident on the Shrewsbury side of the county, determined upon building a kennel and stable, suitable to a proper fox-hunting establishment, and their resolutions were put into effect in a very masterly manner, at an expense of £1,500, which sum was raised by subscription. The kennel, capable of holding a hundred couple of hounds, and complete in every respect, with stalled stabling for twenty-six hunters, and six loose boxes, was built within two miles of the town, on the Whitchurch-road, and, as soon as the walls became dry, was occupied by the hounds and horses of Sir Bellingham Graham, who took to the country with a subscription in 1824, and hunted it, together with the Shiffnal country, two years and a half. The principal covers the Shropshire hounds hunt are within reach of this kennel, but there is also a temporary one at Lee Bridge, when they meet on the Prees side, where some of their best covers lie.

Shropshire, as a hunting country, varies more than any other with which I

am acquainted, some part of it being good, a great deal of it indifferent, but by far the greater part bad. All this, however, is very easily accounted for. In the first place, a large river, the Severn, runs through the centre of it, and is consequently a serious interruption to hounds. The height called the Wrekin also presents itself in nearly the best part of it for sport, and the generality of the covers are large and rough. Nor are these all the objections to it. The low lands are deep, and, in many parishes, boggy ; and black, false-bottomed drains—the most unpleasant obstacle to the sportsman—abound in some directions, and, unfortunately, in those in which foxes are much given to run. As to those parts of the country contiguous to Bridgenorth, Much Wenlock, and Ludlow, they are perfect antidotes to fox-hunting ; but still they have been hunted by fox-hounds as long as I can remember, and I hope they will long continue to be so.

Shropshire is an easy country for horses as regards fences. They are on banks, with single ditches, and by no means large, but they lie thick, and being thorny, are injurious to horses' legs. In short, all the provincial countries are of this character. But Shropshire requires a hunter, and a good one, to carry a man with hounds, as three fields in four are ploughed, and almost every field in the Shropshire hunt is deep in the winter months. In the Shiffnal country this is not the case. With the exception of the turnip-fields (and they are many), the soil being light, that country carries the horses above ground, and the fields, particularly on the Newport side, are larger than those about Shrewsbury.

The best part of the Shropshire country lies between the towns of Wem and Drayton, where there is a great expanse of level fertile plain, which, though described by one of its topographical historians as " flat, dirty, and unpleasant," is on that account favourable to hounds. It is in this flat, dirty, and unpleasant vale that the best cover in the hunt is to be found, called the Twenlows, the property of Sir Rowland Hill, Bart. This place is really capable of showing a run, should the fox be inclined to fly from it ; for there is a large expanse of deep country before him, such as keeps the horses back (a good brook generally at starting, for instance), and gives the hounds a chance. But the great evil in Shropshire is its hollowness, which almost makes it impossible to keep foxes above ground for any length of time. I remember the curious fact of Sir Bellingham running thirteen out of sixteen of his foxes to ground the second season he hunted it ; but this might be remedied by digging out many of those which are not breeding earths. It is, however, a roomy country, and admits of four regular days a week ; is generally full of foxes, and lies (in the part hunted by the Shropshire) very well for scent, considering the great proportion of ploughed land.

A grand feature in the Shropshire country is Hawkestone Park, the seat of the

Hills, among whom was one of the best sportsmen England ever saw—the late Sir John Hill. As a meet for hounds, Hawkestone is anything but good, as not one time in ten will a fox fly from the security of its rocks and covers ; but it is an excellent nursery for foxes, and they make for it, before hounds, from various parts of the country. As connected with fox-hounds, and in character with the natural predilection of the family for the noble diversion of fox-hunting—to which, perhaps, may be owing the prowess they have displayed in arms—one of the lions of the place, to which the stranger is conducted by the guide, is a singular crag of a pyramidal form, finely clad with ivy-bound trees, and strong underwood, called the “ Fox’s Knob,” from the circumstances of a fox having been unkennelled there, which leaped into the valley beneath. The fall being great, reynard was killed on the spot, and also some hounds that followed him. The terrace at Hawkestone is one of the finest in England ; and in the grounds, which are most extensive, there is every variety of hill, vale, wood, and water.

There are two other conspicuous places in the Shropshire hunt—Hayman Hill and Nesscliff. The former is on the property of the Corbets of Sundorne, and commands a splendid view of the Shropshire Vale. It is needless to observe, that being on the Sundorne property it is always a sure find, and often shows a run—sometimes to Hawkestone, at others to Acton Burnell, &c., &c. The other fixture, noted in ancient history, is Nesscliff, ten miles from Shrewsbury, on the Oswestry road, so called from a cliff which overhangs the place, in which is a cave said to have been the hiding place of a notorious robber, who plundered that part of the country. Nesscliff is a sure find, and a Halston fox affords a pretty run over a stiff and deep country.

Acton Burnell Park, Sir Edward Smythe’s, was one of their best meets, and, being the property of such a dear lover of the sport, and joint master of the pack, was of course well preserved. Here are the remains of the old castle in which a parliament was held in the reign of Edward the First, and in which the sovereign himself was entertained.

The late Sir Richard Puleston hunted part of Shropshire from his own kennel at Emral. The Duke of Bridgewater’s covers were some of his chief preserves for foxes, and Petton, Boreatton Park, and Oatley Park near Ellesmere, among his best fixtures in the county.

Having been dropped within ten miles of his kennel, Sir Richard Puleston’s were the first fox-hounds that I hunted with. Sir Richard was never what is termed a hard rider, but always a good horseman, and was so considered in Leicestershire in his early days. When on Flying Ben or his Blue horse, each of which carried him many years, he was generally in a good place with his own hounds if

they ran straight, and a perfect knowledge of his country gave him great advantages when they did not. He was what may be called a very gentleman-like horseman, but not a dashing one, nor so quick as those of the present day. But it was not here "like master like man," Jack Bartlet, Sir Richard's first whipper-in, was one of the quickest of the quick. Nor was this all. In those days, five and thirty years since, it was somewhat rare to see a servant sitting at ease on his saddle, without having his knees very much bent, his rump stuck out as though it was not part of himself, and his horse's head in a vice, as it were, from the iron grasp of a great mutton fist. I was of course but a youth when the performance of Jack Bartlet first attracted my notice, but so much the more striking must have been his superiority ; and I well remember his vast quickness in getting to his hounds, and the neat, nay, *elegant* manner in which he handed his horses over the awkward, rather than large, fences of his very enclosed country ; a field of fifteen acres being somewhat of a novelty in it. I have him now fresh in my mind's eye, on his grey cropped stallion, Helmet, or a still better hunter, a thorough-bred mare, called Euphrosyne, which he rode for many years ; and I must do justice to his memory (for I believe he is gone to ground) to say, that I have yet to see a neater, quicker, or better horseman than Jack Bartlet. He was, however, cast in the right mould to ride. His frame was slender but well proportioned, with good length of fork for his height, his shoulders well back, and his weight about eleven stone with his saddle.

Sir Richard Puleston kept fox-hounds, on and off, as the saying is, upwards of thirty years ; and besides the Shiffnal country, hunted the Atherstone, now held by Mr. Applewhaite, formerly by Sir B. Graham, and afterwards by Lord Lichfield. He was considered a very judicious breeder of hounds, and his blood, that of Dromo,* especially, was much sought after by other masters, far and near. The Duke of Cleveland acknowledged to me the great benefit he received from one large draft from the Emral kennel, at one time ; at another, he gave Sir Richard seven hundred guineas for a large lot of entered hounds, which were accompanied by his celebrated whipper-in, Bob Williams, and a capital mare which the said Bob Williams rode, and which the Duke called "the Puleston mare." She was one of the last of the Old Hundred-house Snap breed.

Sir Richard hunted his own hounds, and did it well. His voice was exceedingly musical, his dog language correct ; and having served a short apprenticeship

* This celebrated hound is buried in the pleasure-grounds at Emral, with this inscription on the headstone,

" ——— Alas ! poor Dromo !
Reynard, with dread, oft heard his awful name."

in Leicestershire, his "turn-out" was altogether *comme il faut*. But he wanted one requisite to make him complete as a huntsman. He did not get forward enough always to be in his place ; and in the course of time, resigned his office of huntsman to Edward Bates, commonly called Ned Bates, who succeeded Jack Bartlet as head whip ; and who hunted his hounds to the last. The second whipper-in, when I last hunted with these hounds, was son to Bates, and as, to use his master's own words,—“ he was got by old Ned, out of a Cheshire dairy-maid—no bad cross,” he promised to make a sportsman.

Sir Richard's home country was very far from a bad one, great portion of it being grass land, with very practicable fences ; but injured in the best parts by the river Dee, in many places not fordable, and the bridges far apart. Latterly, the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn made some gorse covers on the Denbighshire side of the river, greatly to the improvement of the country, which, generally speaking, holds a good scent.

Sir Richard, to a certain extent, followed the plan of his more wealthy neighbour, and brother master, Mr. Corbet of Sundorne Castle, the “ Father of the Trojans,” as he was called, in breeding his own hunters, and several conspicuous ones were the produce of it, besides those used by himself. He bred Mr. Mytton's famous one-eyed gelding, Baronet, who carried his owner nine seasons, without his ever finding the bottom of him ; and, as one proof of his excellence, I saw him clear nine yards over water, under him, in cool blood. He also bred Mr. Robert Canning's Pickle, one of the finest animals to carry weight ever seen by man, and sold to the late Mr. West, of Alscot Park, Warwickshire, for four hundred guineas, after Mr. Canning had ridden him four seasons. Pickle's dam was a very small mare.

Sir Richard Puleston's establishment was, in all departments, remarkable for the superior character and deportment of the servants, and amongst them was one, the son of his steward, who afterwards occupied a conspicuous place in the hunting world. This was the very celebrated Tom Crane, huntsman to the Fife hounds, previously to Walker filling that office, with so much credit. He (Crane) hunted the Duke of Wellington's hounds in Spain ; and afterwards those of Lord Stewart, when residing at Kiltsee Castle, the seat of Prince Esterhazy, who gave his lordship the use of it during his stay in Austria. When with the Duke, Crane's passion for hounds had nearly proved his destruction. He followed the chase into the enemies' lines, when two or three bullets were let loose at him, though happily without effect, by the picquets. The fact, however, goes far to show how light in the scale against the real love of fox-hunting are father, mother, dukes, lords, native country,—even life itself, which was here put to hazard in the zeal for it.

Three remarkable events occurred during Sir Richard Puleston's career as master of hounds. A vixen fox once broke cover, carrying a cub in her mouth, and some of the field having thoughtlessly holloaed on the pack, she was run into, and killed. By some means the London press got hold of the unlucky event, and—although I am sure he was as innocent of the charge as I myself am—Sir Richard was roughly handled on the charge of cruelty to an animal in the exercise of parental affection, and that of the highest order. He was one of the last men to be accused of wanton cruelty to any living creature, and I speak from the experience of many years of his acquaintance.

Again, when he hunted the Shiffnal country, there was a fox in Chillington Park (Mr. Giffard's), which his hounds could not kill. Being invincible, he obtained the name of *Cæsar*, and I heard the late proprietor of that fine domain, once say to Ned Bates, "*A guinea for old Cæsar.*" But it was "no go."

Lastly, these hounds once lost their fox in an extraordinary manner, in that part of the home country, called the Malpas country. After a most brilliant chase, during which, reynard—a shifty one, it appears—tried to house himself more than once, the *whoo-whoop* resounded in the ancient church yard of Malpas. But where was the fox? in the church, or in its yard, it was evident, for he was viewed *in*, but neither viewed nor hunted *out*. "Whether he got into the church," says the reporter of this fine run, "or might have been the spirit of some huntsman of the olden time come to try the mettle of hounds and men of these degenerate days, and so gone to his narrow house again, is not known, but *vanish he did.*"

There was one extraordinary feature in the character of Sir Richard Puleston, as a sportsman, which cannot be passed over. After having abused and ridiculed hare-hunting, up to a certain period of his life; having, in fact, almost quarrelled with his only son for being partial to it, he took into his head to breed not one, but two packs of hare-hounds which, although I never saw them, I have heard spoken of as very perfect of their kind. This took place when there were no fox-hounds at Emral, and I conclude he was unhappy at seeing the benches of his kennel vacant, and having no "cry" of any sort to greet the accustomed ear.

As a companion in the social hour, Sir Richard Puleston possessed talent of the highest order; his manners wore the polish of a court, and he so excelled in colloquial wit, as to have been a favourite companion of George the Fourth, by whom he was made a baronet. I could give a detail of his *bon mots*, and repartees, which would have been deemed worthy of Sheridan or Foote, but I shall confine myself to two or three which are somewhat of a sporting character.

Being informed that his only son was out with a pack of harriers, he said, "I have *entered him to hare, but I hope he will be steady afterwards.*" His hopes here

were disappointed, for his son, the present baronet, has kept harriers nearly as long as his father kept fox-hounds, and has them to this day.

During the period of Sir Richard himself keeping harriers, a fox jumped up before them, and they killed him. On a friendly remonstrance from the then master of the Cheshire pack, against further trespass upon his manor, Sir Richard replied : —“ As your hounds occasionally kill *my* game, I may surely be allowed now and then to kill *yours*.”

When speaking of a certain lady, who was in the habit of turning her eyes up towards heaven, after a saint-like form one moment, and talking rather loosely the next, Sir Richard observed, in the language of the stud-book, that “ *she was got by the Whole Duty of Man out of the Woman of Pleasure.*”

Sir Richard Puleston died in the year 1840, at the age of seventy-seven, another proof of the benefit to health of the active pursuits of the field, inasmuch as he may be said to have lived all the days of his life ; and an excellent character was given of him in the Shrewsbury Chronicle, as a country gentleman, a sportsman, a landlord, a friend and neighbour ; and though last, not least, a good Christian.

I was also dropped within a dozen miles of another kennel of fox-hounds, kept by the late Colonel Wardle and Sir Harry Goodricke (father to the late baronet), who were confederates in a pack which hunted Flintshire, the kennel being at Hartsheath, the residence of the Colonel. The Baronet's riding day was then gone by, owing to attacks of gout, but the Colonel was a fine horseman. Few persons knew him better than I knew him, and had he devoted himself to fox-hunting instead of to politics, he would have signalized himself as a sportsman ; for he had one great essential, which is, a burning *zeal*, almost unequalled in real life. He had also all the requisites for an English country gentleman.

These hounds were hunted by a man of the name of Robert Jones, whom I knew well,—he afterwards kept the White Horse Inn, in the beautiful village of Overton, between Ellesmere and Wrexham ; was celebrated for his breed of terriers, and generally possessed a stallion. Of his merits as a huntsman I am unable to speak, for reasons already given ; but he was a well-conducted person in private life, and much respected in his public situation, as Boniface.

I remember a circumstance that occurred in one good run these hounds had. A hard-riding whipper-in, whose name I forget, was put on a four-year-old horse, to which he objected at starting, telling his master he feared he should kill him if they had a good run. “ Do the best you can with him,” said his master, “ but don't kill him if you can help it.” On the road home, however, Wardle overtook the whip, “ padding the hoof,” with his saddle and bridle at his back. “ I told you how it would be, sir,” said he, “ *he's dead.*”

When the Colonel gave up his hounds, his brother fox-hunter, Sir Richard Puleston, said a good thing on the occasion. "Wardle has given up his hounds," said he, "for want of the *kennel*"—alluding to a species of coal known by that name, which was not then so abundant on his estates as it had been.

By the means of a mis-print, it has been believed by many readers of the celebrated poem of Billesden Coplow, by Mr. Lowth, that Colonel Wardle was one of the performers in the memorable run which furnished the author with his thesis. The person alluded to was the renowned Jacob Wardell, now also gathered to his fathers, the decease of Colonel Wardle having preceded his by some four or five years. He died abroad, having, to use his own words, "expatriated himself in disgust with his native country." Better had it been for him that he had "stuck to the brush," and signalized himself as a sportsman; contenting himself with drawing covers, instead of entangling himself in the thorny mazes of political strife, with a blank draw at the last.

Early impressions will last a man's life, be it the "three score years and ten," and another score added to them,—that is to say, if they are stamped deeply. It is no wonder then that the first well appointed sportsman that I met with in my teens, should be now fresh in my mind's eye! for, as Hudibras says,

"He that excels in what we prize,
Appears a hero in our eyes."

This was no other than the well known and universally esteemed Mr. Lloyd Williams, of Penylon, near Wrexham, just on the borders of North Wales, for many years the leading rider in Sir Richard Puleston's and other hunts in the neighbourhood: and also always keeping a good place in Oxfordshire, where he hunted several seasons, in his countryman's, the late Sir Thomas Mostyn's, time.* Independently of his horsemanship, which was extremely neat and gentlemanlike, and the correctness of his stable appointments, Mr. Williams's choice of hunters was good; and all those who recollect his Tarquin, Old Port, and others, will do well to carry them in their mind when they purchase hunters for themselves—that is to say, *if the weight tallies*.

Contemporary with Mr. Lloyd Williams was a brother of mine, and his being my brother is no reason for his being omitted here, for I believe the sun seldom shone on a better or more straight-forward rider. But then he was a parson! And what of that? Don't be surprised if I bring out a bishop, and above all, don't imagine I mean disrespect towards any body or any thing; for notwithstanding

* At the time I am speaking of, this gentleman's name was Lloyd Kenyon, first cousin to Lord Kenyon. He subsequently became Mr. Lloyd only; and is now Lloyd Williams; all of which changes arose out of several accessions of property, of which no man is more deserving.

standing St. Jerome has said "*Venatorem nunquam legimus sanctum*"—some of the best parish priests that I have known have been sportsmen ;—charitably disposed and well conducted country clergymen, who, spurning the affectation of a sanctity neither called for *nor approved of by nine-tenths of mankind*, occasionally partake of the health-giving and gentleman-like diversion of hunting and other sports of the field—once recommended to them by their superiors.

But to the proof of this "straight-forward rider." It is to be found in every country in which he hunted, and all those few now left who hunted with the late Duke of Beaufort, *in his day*—the day of the Spectre Mare, and Hermit—will recollect how straight he went. Neither is he forgotten in Worcestershire, where he finished his hunting career with the death of his gallant grey. But perhaps I have still better authority—that of the late Lord Forester, who, on discussing the riders of a certain hunt, settled the matter by exclaiming, in his usual forcible style—"*Give me that little parson in the oil-skin hat.*" Now all his Lordship's old friends could swear that this is no forgery. The words were uttered over the horse-shoe table at Wynnstay, and they are exactly his.

Previously to quitting the field in which I was first entered to hounds, I may be allowed to notice one or two more of the riders with whom I first came in contact. At the head of these I will place a person of *great weight*, in every sense of the word, viz., the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, of whom, with his own harriers, and with fox-hounds, in several different countries, I saw a great deal in chase. I shall begin then by saying, that my countryman was one, who, I believe, never knew fear : and although he was, in his noviciate, by no means the cleverest horseman of his years, he persevered until he accomplished the horseman's art, as will be readily attested by many sportsmen who have seen him go very well over Leicestershire, and other galloping countries, very much to the credit of his horses and his groom. But looking at his horses, what splendid ones did he ride to carry his weight, viz., eighteen stone ! I think I hear his *quondam* one-eyed pad-boy, Tom Penn (I say *quondam*, for he broke his neck), after having conned over, perhaps, *the finest hunter in the field*, pompously exclaim—"If that there horse was but a bit bigger, I should buy him for Sir Watkin." To do justice to Tom, however, he was a good judge of a horse to carry a welter weight, but the coolest subject to his superiors that ever wore a livery. Of the worthy Welsh baronet, indeed, he may be said to have been master, as the following anecdote will show. Travelling one day with a brother sportsman, (the Hon. Philip Pierrepont, I believe,) he passed his stable in Oxfordshire. "We shall see the horses," said Pierrepont. "Of course," said Sir Watkin ; and they were worth seeing. But if I recollect right, Xerxes said "*sail*," but Zephyrus said "*no*." And Tom Penn said "no,"



OLD HUGO MEYNELL IN 1794, with Glider his favourite hound, and JACK RAVEN his huntsman. *From a print after C. LORRAINE SMITH.*

and after the following fashion too. "Well, Tom," said the Baronet, after alighting from his carriage, "how are the horses?" "The horses are well enough, Sir Watkin, but I am very *hill*." "What ails you?" "Damnationist pain in my side I ever had in my life." "I should like to see the horses." "You can't, they have been shut up these two hours." The baronet and his friend re-entered the drag, and pursued their journey.

Now I well recollect the fact of my knocking down a groom, who lived nine years in my service, for refusing to admit me into my stable; but so convinced was I that he was right and I was wrong, that I paid five pounds smart money the next morning, and he lived several more years with me. But if I thought it wrong that *my* horses should be disturbed, how much more necessary must uninterrupted repose be to those who had carried such a weight as Sir Watkin's! Let us picture to ourselves the morrow after a fine run over the deepest part of the Bicester Vale, and one of those horses banged, bruised, and sore, taking courage to lie down, and, it may be, rolling half over in his stall or box, and then settling himself comfortably, with head reclined and out-stretched legs, in the fond expectation of a few hours' repose,—as much looked for by horses where regular stable hours are kept, as by ourselves when we retire to our beds. Fancy then, I say, the door opening, and baulking this poor animal of the treat he had prepared for himself. Why we must all come to the same conclusion, that Tom Penn was right and his master wrong. But I have something more to say of Sir Watkin as a horseman. He had, to my eye, as fine a hunting hand (if I may use the expression) on his horse, over a country, as I ever saw; and let the pace be quick or slow, he was never seen interfering with his mouth, but merely giving him the office as circumstances might require. The figure delineated in the Leicestershire plates, as "Going in and out clever," was intended for Sir Watkin, and is an excellent representation of his person and seat.

The late Mr. Mytton hunted different parts of Shropshire for two or three seasons, having at one time the Shiffnal country, which he hunted alternately with his own. His kennel then was at Ivetsy Bank, on the old Chester road; and strange to say, Mr. Mytton used *frequently* to ride from Halston to covers even beyond Ivetsy Bank to meet his hounds, and return home to dinner,—making upwards of eighty miles on the road, and he has been known to do this on two successive days. I certainly envy the strong physical powers that enable any man to perform such Herculean feats as these, but I consider them very prejudicial in their effects, and an unnecessary waste of horse-flesh. The best runs Mr. Mytton's hounds had, were from the covers in his own neighbourhood, with wild travelling foxes that came down from the Welsh hills. Sir B. Graham once found one of these bits of Welsh vermin at Bobbin's Wood, which led his hounds nearly to the

romantic town of Llangollen, on the Holyhead road, where they killed him. With another, which the Halston covers produced, he had, perhaps, as severe a day for hounds and horses as ever was experienced in Shropshire, the chase continuing for two hours and forty-five minutes, at the end of which he was killed. Those who know the country can judge of the severity of this run, when I state that after going with extraordinary swiftness nearly to the town of Ellesmere, the fox put his head right about, and crossed the deep and extensive vale to Lord Dungannon's woods, near Chirk. Here he was again headed, when he boldly faced the Welsh mountains, and died near Llansillen in Denbighshire. Three horses died also.

Mr. Mytton was one of the "irregulars," for with a fair pack of hounds he would spoil them by turning out bag foxes before them. As a master of hounds this was a sad blot on the sporting reputation of my old friend ; and I shall never forget the quiet rebuke Sir Bellingham Graham gave him when, after inspecting his hounds in the Halston kennel, he was shown a leash of foxes in another place. Mr. Mytton believed them to be Welsh ones, from a distance ; but it was by no means impossible that they might have been taken in some of the best covers in the part of Shropshire at that time hunted by Sir Bellingham.

That the sort of off-hand talent displayed on all occasions by Mr. Mytton, should have been brought into action in a pursuit so congenial with his feelings as fox-hunting, is only what might have been expected, and to a considerable extent was it displayed in his character as a master of hounds. As for myself, I am at a loss to account for many things that came under my observation having reference to his fox-hunting establishment. In the first place, with a very indifferent huntsman, and a very wild master, who would have looked for steadiness in Mr. Mytton's hounds ? And yet they were not more unsteady than many others I could name. I here speak of the pack with which he hunted the Albrighton country, from 1817 to the close of the season of 1821, inclusive, making five seasons in all, and five days in the week ; and I may add, with a fair share of sport. Secondly, who would have looked for *punctuality* in the hour of meeting, from a person of Mr. Mytton's uncertain habits ? and yet, although he never possessed a watch, he was scarcely ever known to be half an hour beyond his time, come from where he might. But, I repeat, who would have looked for anything like management or order in Mr. Mytton's hunting establishment ? and yet it did exist. Who could have looked for anything like steadiness in hounds, which he once, in my presence, let out of the kennel at Halston in a very hard frost, with a bagman before them,—returning as they might, for no horse could follow them,—after having amused themselves in any way that might have been agreeable to them ?

All things considered, it was not likely that many masters of hounds would

be inclined to breed from, still less to purchase, the contents of Mr. Mytton's kennel. On his giving up his first pack of fox-hounds, however,—for he had been a master of harriers from his boyhood,—he luckily found an Irish customer for the greater part of them : whilst his second, which he purchased of Mr. Newman of Hornchurch, Essex, were sold for somewhere about the value of their skins. Nor was this to be wondered at. He not only hunted them himself, but would occasionally, as I have witnessed, and described in the Memoir I wrote of his Life, play all sorts of antic tricks with them, both in the kennel and in the field. For example : I once saw him, when well primed with a Shropshire luncheon, make two very wide casts for his fox, which he knew was not gone that way, merely for the sake of inducing his field to follow him over some rather awkward fences !

I could never discover whether or not Mr. Mytton was at heart a sportsman—that is to say, whether or not he enjoyed seeing his hounds at work, beyond the mere pleasure any master might feel at the finish of a good run ; when—although he himself had little enough of that infirmity in his composition—his vanity might be flattered. I never heard him cheer an individual hound when drawing, or in chase ; nor, with the exception of Hudibras, whose portrait was taken with his own, had he any favourite hound, as most masters have ; neither did he know the names of all the hounds in his kennel. This last assertion, however, requires some qualification. He would tell his friends he did not know their names, but whether such was really the case, I cannot take upon myself to say, knowing his disposition on trifling matters to disguise his real sentiments.

I have said that Mr. Mytton's hounds had not justice done them by their huntsman, who was far from clever, although an excellent servant in all other respects. His name was John Craggs, and he was unfortunately killed by a fall from a restive horse in the stable yard at Halston. His second pack, as I have already said, were hunted by himself, and whipped in by Ned Evans, who was a beautiful horseman, and by no means deficient in his duties in the field.

Of Mr. Mytton as a horseman, it would be useless to say a word, were it not to confirm the truth of an opinion often urged by me—namely, that men above eleven stone get better over a country than men under that weight. The fact is, strength will be served ; and to show how necessary it is in the saddle, in assisting a hunter over a country, Mr. Mytton was never known to have his so completely beaten as not to carry him to the end of a run ; neither was he ever obliged to walk home, as might have been expected to have been the case, from his desperate style of riding. He had a heavy hand ; but, from the immense strength of his arm, it was a vast support to his horses ; and no horse ever yet foaled, would have carried his weight—good thirteen stone—at his pace, with a loose head and a slack rein.

Some part of Shropshire was also hunted by Mr. Wickstead's hounds, and a small part of it, on the Oswestry side, was hunted by the Welsh pack, a few years back, kept by a gentleman named Jones, of Maesmawr, near Welsh-pool, the sale of whose horses, when the pack was given up, excited much interest. Every thing connected with this establishment was conducted on the old system—the *real hunting to death of the fox*; and in proof of their prowess, I may chronicle the well-known fact of their having killed fifty-four out of sixty-three foxes, the last season of their hunting.

The Shropshire gentlemen meet twice in the season at Shrewsbury, for a week each time. These weeks are called the Old and the New Shrewsbury Hunt weeks—the former in November and the latter in January. The gentlemen dine together in the great room at the Lion Inn, and each hunt gives a splendid ball and supper to the ladies. Perhaps no other county in England, but Salop, can boast of such gay doings as these. But the “proud Salopians” are very sociable people, and generally do these things in good style.

Shropshire was never hunted in a form equal to that in which Sir Bellingham Graham hunted it, in consequence of the magnificence of his establishment. The celebrity of the man, also, gave much éclat to his proceedings, and in spite of one disastrous season for *scent*—very generally acknowledged as such—his hounds afforded excellent sport. He likewise found many congenial spirits among the natives, and has often been heard to say, he quitted the country with regret. There are several excellent riders in Shropshire; but there is one—Mr. Leicester of Routon Castle, near Shrewsbury—of whom Sir Bellingham pronounced the flattering opinion—that he never saw a better *anywhere*.

We now take our leave of Shropshire, undoubtedly one of the chief of our sporting counties, being celebrated for the sporting character of its aristocracy, and still more, of its yeomanry. In fact it presents a true picture of the genuine English character, as exhibited in the state of the various classes of society; and its proximity and relation to North Wales, contribute to heighten the colouring. The gentry are not, perhaps, wholly free from that species of pride which common consent has allowed to them, but it consists more in dignity than haughtiness, and consequently is rather a failing than a vice. Indeed, it may admit of a question, whether, in these levelling times, it tends not to encourage, rather than to impede, the exercise of those social virtues which ameliorate the condition of the people? One thing, however, is certain:—The middle classes in Shropshire are well informed, enlightened, and celebrated for their good fellowship and hospitality; and their example has not been lost upon those labouring classes who are dependent upon them.

CHAPTER II



ASTING over my boyish days, I will proceed to the first year of my visiting Leicestershire, which was in 1802, I believe, at all events it was the first year of Lord Sefton's taking the Quorn hounds from Mr. Meynell ; and I cannot do better than commence with Mr. Meynell himself. Of course I saw him too late in life to form a fair judgment on his usual method of riding to hounds, which I always heard spoken of as not only judicious but bold. I can only, at this distance of time, indeed, call to my recollection one instance of his coming under my observation in a run, and that was in a very sharp burst of about twenty minutes, from Thrussington Wolds, our fox being so blown at the finish of it that he sank in attempting to cross a canal. I travelled along-side this pattern for fox-hunters great part of the way, and have his figure at this moment before me in my mind's eye. He rode a strong black horse, possessing twice the speed he appeared to have, and of course, a perfect fencer. Indeed, I saw his rider charge a very fair brook, just before the finish, scarcely appearing to look at it ; his attention being riveted to the hounds, which he was frequently heard to cheer. Although forty-one years ago, I have a good recollection of his face, and still better of his person ; his grey locks more than peeping from under his black cap, and his keen, aye, piercing eye. I remember also that he sat rather on one side on his saddle, as if he had one stirrup shorter than the other, and was without spurs, but kept kicking his horse's sides with his heels, not at all afraid of going the pace over all kinds of ground. His appearance was extremely sportsmanlike.

I now come to his successor, the late Lord Sefton, at that time in his prime, and, the best mounted man in England for his weight, which is saying a great deal. But what prices he gave ! Plato, Gooseberry, and Rowland, all of which I remember in his stud, cost him nearly a thousand pounds apiece ; and he offered

Mr. Loraine Smith, about this period, eight hundred guineas for his famous Hollyhock horse, which, unfortunately for the latter, he refused, as he afterwards died in chase in consequence of the rupture of a blood vessel. Lord Sefton's style of riding over a country was peculiar. He was one of the quickest men I ever met with in making up lost ground, or turning to his hounds in a run ; but when he got well away, he had seldom much ground to make up, and considering his great weight—which eventually estranged him from fox-hunting—he was a very brilliant performer in the field. He was averse to timber fences in a run, always avoiding them if possible, and—as all heavy weights have the power to do—boring through the thickest blackthorn hedges in preference to them. In allusion to his weight, and the pace he travelled at over a country, the author of *The Epwell Hunt Poem*, in a ludicrous description (never published) of a run he saw in Leicestershire, in his time, thus speaks of his Lordship :—

“ Earl Sefton came next, and, for beef on the rib,
No Leicestershire bullock was rounder ;
A wonderful weight at a wonderful rate,
He flew like a twenty-four pounder ! ”

I have reason to believe that the late Lord Sefton was one of those clear-headed men in all worldly matters, who do well whatever they attempt to do. At all events, his lordship did honour to fox-hunting, in the highly-spirited manner in which he hunted the Quorn country for five consecutive seasons. The stables are to this day monuments of his liberal expenditure. He was the first master I ever heard of, and I believe him to have been the first, who kept two huntsmen,—John Raven who hunted the old pack, and Stephen Goodall, the young one—and I also believe him to have been the first to introduce the second horse system, now so regularly practised. Then, the cover-side in the seasons I am alluding to, 1802, and 3, bore an aristocratic appearance such as it may be said scarcely to have borne since. When approachable by wheels, there would be seen not only his lordship's coach and four, driven by himself, but numerous other teams, the carriages containing ladies to see the hounds throw off.*

I was too ignorant of hunting at the date of Lord Sefton's occupying Leicestershire, to offer a decided opinion of his lordship as a sportsman, but he had a great advantage in the society of the celebrated Mr. Meynell, whose services, he was no doubt, too good a judge not to make available.

Every thing was done in a princely style at Quorndon Hall. The kennels contained nearly a hundred couples of hounds, and the great stable, containing

* Several noblemen and gentlemen—amongst them the late Lord Foley, the late Sir Stephen Glynne, and Mr. Mellish—hunting with the Quorn hounds at this time, had their teams.

THE GRAND LEICESTERSHIRE STEEPLECHASE, MARCH 12, 1829

Mr. Heycock
on Captain
Ross' Horse
Clinker



Painted by Henry Alken; engraved by C. Bentley.

Mr. Beacher in the
act of falling

Dick Christian on
Mr. Maxse's grey
hunter "King of
the Valley."

THE GRAND LEICESTERSHIRE STEEPLECHASE, MARCH 12, 1829

Nimrod reading the Articles of the Race



Mr. Barclay
The grey Horse at the far end of the line is Mr. Maxse's
King of the Valley, ridden by Dick Christian

Sir Francis Mackenzie's
Roan gelding Spartacus
ridden by Mr. Guilford

Painted by H. ALKEN engraved by C. BENTLEY. The print lent by Messrs. Fores

twenty-eight horses, was lit up at night by a patent lamp to every fourth stall. That Lord Sefton's reign should have been so short (it did not see the sixth season) is to be lamented ; and the cause of his giving up had somewhat the appearance of fastidiousness. He declared that he could not find horses to carry him at the pace he wished to go ;—that pace was certainly an ultra one.

The conspicuous men in the field in Lord Sefton's time were, his lordship himself, Mr. Germaine, Sir Henry Peyton, Lord Foley, Sir Stephen Glynne, Mr. T. A. Smith, Hon. Berkeley Craven, Hon. Joshua Vanneck, afterwards Lord Huntingfield, Mr. Hawkes, Mr. Lockley, the late Lord Forester, Lord Delamere, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Lindow, the late Colonel Mellish, Mr. Charles Meynell, Colonel Rolleston, and amongst the yeomen and graziers, Joe Deveril, of Shoby, Tom Hinton, of Hoby, commonly called "Gameboy Hinton," Wings, Jonathan King, of Beilby, Marriott, the Melton draper, and Ben Rowland the farrier, to whom Lord Sefton gave a large price for his horse.

At the time I am alluding to, John Raven and Stephen Goodall, both long since dead, were huntsmen to Lord Sefton ; Joe Harrison and Tom Wingfield whipping in to them. It may be necessary to state that each huntsman had his pack. Nature had interdicted superior horsemanship to Goodall ; for although she had given him his full share of brains, she formed him with a great carcass upon short legs (very good qualities in a horse), and an aptitude to feed (still better in a hog), that would not be satisfied until the maximum exceeded twenty stone. But Raven was cast in a very different mould. Straight as a dart, as full of power as he was of muscle, and with a voice and features well fitted to his calling, he struck me as the beau ideal of a huntsman and a horseman combined. He also had his hounds in perfect command upon all occasions, so much so, that I recollect I never heard him blow his horn but once in three days' hunting, and that was when a hound called Cruiser was lost. I likewise remember his cool conduct with regard to a celebrated hound called Guzman : he was running a hare, with a hedge between them,—in fact running he did not exactly know what, as he only got an occasional glimpse. A whipper-in started after him, when Raven called him back, saying, "Leave him alone, he will stop when he sees what he is running ;" and he did stop. Guzman was a throaty hound, but his blood is to be traced in several kennels to this day, having been held in high esteem.

Cork-legged Jones * did not whip in to Lord Sefton, having died in the service of Mr. Meynell, but I know that Tom Wingfield and Joe Harrison did. A nephew

* Tom Jones, otherwise "cork-legged Jones," was a capital whipper-in, but as hard a drinker as he was a rider. A friend of mine, who saw him a few days prior to his death, told me he confessed to him that sometimes he could not recollect, when he awoke in the morning, where he had left his leg over night.

of John Raven's also appeared in the costume of a whipper-in, riding Lord Sefton's second horse ; he was not ridden to points, as is the present system, but close in his lordship's wake ; and as young Raven could ride in the same length of stirrup leather as his lordship, the horses were exchanged at the most convenient opportunity. This system, however, could not become general, inasmuch as it would not do to have all the second horses going in, and adding to, the crowd : and as it is the pace that kills it can only be considered advisable in the case of a very heavy weight, which Lord Sefton was.

Joe Harrison was likewise a splendid horseman, and I believe and hope he is still alive. Indeed, some time ago I heard of a person in a blue coat taking the lead, and keeping it, to the surprise of the whole field, *over an extremely difficult country*, and when the thing was ended, the artist was discovered to be old Joe Harrison. Of Tom Wingfield I need not say much, as he has been so many years before the public since he left Leicestershire, as huntsman to the Mostyn hounds. No man need ride better than Tom Wingfield could ride, and he could see a country and hounds better out of that one eye of his than most people can with two. I shall never forget him once turning round to me, in Leicestershire, after he had looked back and perceived that the fence we had come over had stopped one of the field ; and the emphasis with which he exclaimed—" *I think, sir, that there gentleman has no business in our shire.*"

Leicestershire, situated in the heart of England, bounded on the north by Nottinghamshire, on the south by Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, on the east by Lincoln and Rutland, and on the west by Derbyshire, is of no great extent, being only about thirty-six miles in length, and thirty in breadth ; the extreme points being the town of Market Harborough, and Cavendish Bridge, on the road from London to Manchester. In the absence of all perfection, it is as a hunting country as nearly approaching to it as nature and art can make it, and its fame may be said to have reached the remotest corners of the civilized world.

At the conclusion of the last century the sporting reputation of this far-famed county was at its height. They were the days of Mr. Meynell, who was then looked upon as not only the most intelligent and successful huntsman of his time, but as one who introduced a fresh era to the sporting world. They were also the days of Charles Wyndham and Lord Villiers, of Forester and Cholmondeley, of Childe of Kinlet, and Loraine Smith, of Ralph Lambton and John Lockley, George Germaine, John Hawkes, and several others to whom the present generation is indebted for the dashing style of riding to hounds which continues to distinguish our modern sportsmen. Towards the conclusion of Mr. Meynell's occupation of Leicestershire a galaxy of brilliant young horsemen also appeared in the field,

amongst whom were Lord Foley, Sir Henry Peyton, the late Sir Stephen Glynne, Messrs. Thomas Assheton Smith, Lindow, Bruin, Edge, and some others whose names will be remembered for ages to come.

Mr. Meynell was succeeded by the Earl of Sefton, who, as I have already said, hunted his country (the Quorn) in a style of great magnificence, and his lordship was succeeded by Mr. T. A. Smith, who kept the Quorn hounds nine seasons, and then Mr. Osbaldeston took to them. He kept them till the middle of the season of 1821, when Sir Bellingham Graham became their master, but after two seasons resigned them to Mr. Osbaldeston again, who hunted the county till Lord Southampton took possession of it. The country is now hunted by a committee, at the head of which are Sir Holyoake Goodricke, and Mr. George Payne.

Now a word or two of these respective masters. Of Mr. Meynell, the Mæcenas of fox-hunting, it is almost presumptuous in me to give an opinion, having only seen him in the last year of his brilliant career. But I well remember the lessons he gave to all would-be huntsmen. I remember the steadiness and docility of his hounds, and the superior manner in which they hunted through hares, cattle, or sheep ; the quiet way in which he waited for them to recover the scent when lost, and his division of his pack when they made their casts, instead of having them driven after his huntsman like a flock of sheep. I also fancy I hear his chiding voice and his cheering holloa. The one was efficient without unnecessary noise ; the other musical, distinct, and thrilling through the heart and nerve of every one who was near enough to hear it. His scream, in a view, naturally acute, was remarkable and susceptible : he had a wonderfully quick eye to the faults committed by his hounds, which he could the better discern from the reliance he placed on their own powers in chase. He allowed them to spread, and to use those powers at a very gentle pace, which, from his command over his field, it was fortunately in his power to do. Of blood, he was more indifferent than most owners of fox-hounds are wont to be. "The wildest packs of hounds," he has been heard to say, "are known to kill the most foxes in cover, but very seldom show good runs over a country." Mr. Meynell made no display of his riding in the field, but when with his hounds in chase nothing that he considered feasible would stop his being in his place. As a companion he was the delight of every society in which he appeared. To an excellent understanding he joined great knowledge of the world ; and his walk through life having led him into the best of company, the combination of the man of fashion with the sportsman rendered his character complete in the situation he had undertaken to fill.

It is difficult at the present time to say what has become of that highly-prized strain of blood of the celebrated Hugo Meynell, commonly called the Quorn blood.

Perhaps we should find most of it in the Cheshire kennel, that good sportsman, the late Mr. Heron, having regularly bred from it for a long succession of years, when he had the management of that old-established pack. It is also to be found in the kennel of his grandson, Mr. Hugo Charles Meynell Ingram, of Hoarcross, Derbyshire, who was presented with it by Mr. Heron—and I must say it was a compliment due to him. Among the lot were three bitches, two of which were descended from Mr. Meynell's famous Stormer, and one from General, the sire of the equal famous Guzman, who was out of Priestess. The dam of these bitches was also of the Quorn blood. The Stormer blood is now in great repute in the present Mr. Meynell's kennel, his celebrated Nathan being a noble specimen of it. He is by Mr. Meynell's Bertram, out of his Nelly, which was descended in a direct line from Stormer and the Quorn blood on both sides. Bertram was by Lord Althorp's famous Abelard (Mr. Warde's famous Charon sort), out of Mr. Meynell's Bridesmaid—the grand-dam of which bitch was given to Mr. Meynell by the well-known Jack Raven, huntsman to his grandfather, to the period of his giving up the hounds. She was got by Ranter, out of Bonnybell, a favourite bitch of his master's, and one which Raven used to say he could swear by.

As I have before observed, Mr. Meynell was succeeded by Lord Sefton ; and he was succeeded by the late Lord Foley, who had for some seasons been residing in the county, and was in every way qualified for the undertaking, barring the lessons of experience.

I did not see much of Lord Foley whilst master of the Quorn hounds, which he kept not quite two seasons, because I was at that time elected a member of the Stratford-on-Avon Hunt Club, and the attraction was, consequently, Warwickshire. Lord Foley, however, could not be otherwise than popular in any situation in life ; he did everything with an open and liberal hand, and it is much to be regretted that he at length was diverted from the hunting field, to the destructive pursuits of the dice, and the hazard table. I was frequently out with his hounds when he hunted Worcestershire, and saw one very remarkable run with them, such as it was hardly to be expected so indifferent a country could have afforded. A person by the name of Green was his huntsman, but being an indifferent horseman, and in my opinion a still more indifferent huntsman, his first whipper-in, Richard Forster, afterwards huntsman to Mr. Villebois, and until lately in that situation with the H. H. (late Mr. Villebois's), as often performed that office as himself.

A few years previously to Mr. Meynell resigning Leicestershire, the face of the country, as a hunting country, underwent a material change. During the greater part of his hunting, all the Nottinghamshire and part of the Market Harborough side of the country was open, and the foxes were as wild as the region in

which they were bred. The consequence was runs of much greater duration than those of later times. Second horses, as they are called, were then never dreamed of ; and some of the few who are now left of those who hunted in Meynell's best time, will tell us it was pretty well if a man could say where he should dine or sleep, much less where he should fall in with his second horse in the run. It must be admitted that, advantageous as to the preservation of foxes, and consequently the certainty of finding, as may be the number of artificial gorse covers now planted in Leicestershire, they are at variance with the wild character of fox-hunting, by tempting the game to run short. Perhaps, speaking generally, one fox found in Leicestershire in 1792, may have been worth a brace found in 1842. Another alteration has also been effected. The new enclosures, particularly in the Harborough country, were strongly fenced with posts and rails, to preserve the quicksets that now form the bullfinch hedges, which from their luxuriant growth would fain arrest the progress of the sportsman ; and it can only be seen to be believed what thick places the Leicestershire horses will make their way through, after having had a year or two's experience of them in the country. The post-and-rail fence, however, required an accomplished hunter, and the "going in and out clever" formed a subject for a print very fresh in our recollections, and most admirably delineated by the artist. Mr. Lindow "going a slapping pace on the Clipper," also formed one of the set of those admirable sketches, and I always lament there is not some well-skilled pencil at work on those scenes each succeeding year. I am quite certain the artist would be very well paid for his trouble, provided he knew what he was about.

Lord Foley was succeeded in the possession of the Quorn hounds by that most conspicuous sportsman of modern times, Thomas Assheton Smith, who kept them eight or nine seasons. As combining the character of a skilful sportsman with that of a desperate horseman, perhaps his parallel is not to be found, and his name will be handed down to posterity as a specimen of enthusiastic zeal in one individual pursuit, very rarely equalled. Mr. Smith did not become a master of fox-hounds because it was the fashion to be a master of fox-hounds, neither did he go a hunting because others went a hunting, neither did he ride well up to his hounds one day, and loiter a mile behind them the next. No ; from the first day of the season to the last, he was always the same man, the same desperate fellow over a country, and unquestionably possessing *on every occasion, and at every hour of the day*, the most bull-dog-like nerve ever exhibited in a saddle. His motto was, "I'll be with my hounds," and all those who have seen him in the field must acknowledge he made no vain boast of his prowess. His falls were countless, and no wonder ! for he rode at places which *he knew* no horse could leap over, but his object was to

get one way or other into the field with his hounds. As a horseman, however, he has ever been super-excellent. He sits in his saddle as if he were part of his horse, and his seat displays vast power over his frame. In addition to his power, his hand is equal to Chifney's, and the advantage he experiences from it may be gleaned from the following expression. Being seen one day hunting his hounds on Radical, always a difficult, but at that time a more than commonly difficult horse to ride, he was asked by a friend why he did not put a martingale on him to give more power over his mouth—his answer was cool and laconic : “ Thank ye, but my left hand shall be *my* martingale.” Mr. Smith was the first gentleman who fulfilled the character of huntsman to his hounds in this far-famed country. In this occupation his desperate style of riding was of very material service to him, as he never had his eye off his hounds, unless when left behind by a fall, though he was quickly in his place again after that. The best of horses,—Jack-a-Lantern, Tom Thumb, his big grey horse, and Gift,—good as they were, would, however, sometimes stand still with him in a burst, and then he was obliged to wait for a whipper-in to come up, and take possession of his horse to proceed with ; but this was not of course an every-day occurrence. As a huntsman then he may be said to be eminent in chase, decidedly so, because nothing stopped him in his casts, and we know how many foxes are lost by an ugly fence being in the way at this critical time. Leicestershire is a country of all others in which wide and bold casts are successful, for reasons which I shall hereafter produce. Every person who has been in Leicestershire knows the necessity of having good command over the field, a very serious and often hazardous duty devolving on the master of the pack. Here Mr. Smith was also successful. He set out by declaring that he was not the best tempered man in the world, and he hoped, if at any time he said what might be deemed harsh to his brother sportsmen, they would attribute it to his zeal to show sport, and not to an intention to give offence. We have the pleasure of stating then, that, with one or two trifling exceptions, producing no serious results, he passed through his fiery ordeal, continued for the number of seasons I have specified, and quitted his proud station as master and huntsman of the Quorn hounds in 1819, esteemed as a sportsman, and valued as a man. There may be some who may tell me his language was sometimes coarser than occasion could justify, and it is not for me to decide the point. All I will say is,—his language was never that of a bully, for a braver man never stepped on the earth, nor one who displayed in clearer colours, the thorough courage of a true bred Briton. Indeed I may ask with the poet—

“ Is there the man into the lion's den
Who dares intrude to snatch his young away ? ”

and answer Thomas Assheton Smith is he !



TOM SEBRIGHT, Huntsman, from whom Squire Osbaldeston learnt a great deal. See what Nimrod relates on this point. *From a lithograph by J. W. GILES after R. B. DAVIS, 1839. The print lent by Messrs. Fores, London.*

Although Mr. Smith quitted Quorndon Hall when he resigned the Quorn country to Mr. Osbaldeston, he continued to hunt with the several packs in the neighbourhood during his annual visits to Belvoir Castle, where he generally remained throughout the season. Here again Mr. Smith, or *Tom Smith* par excellence, was the same hard riding Tom Smith he had ever been, and unlike many quondam masters of fox-hounds, he took pleasure in hunting with hounds not his own. He is now, having succeeded to the vast estates of his father, once more *a master*, hunting the country surrounding his own seat in Hampshire, having given Sir Richard Sutton a thousand guineas for his hounds ; and his old Leicestershire servant, Dick Burton, assisting him in the kennel and the field. His persevering in hunting so indifferent a country as his present one, after having had cream of Leicestershire, stamps his character still deeper as a sportsman, though indeed it has never yet been doubted.

The mention of Belvoir Castle, brings to my recollection the extraordinary exploit performed by Mr. Smith when he hunted the Quorn country, in a run he had of nineteen miles point blank, known by the appellation of "the Belvoir day."

I now take leave of Mr. Smith as the Master of the Quorn hounds, and as one of the best men that ever went across Leicestershire or any other country, but it is possible I may return to him in his present country when I bring Hampshire as a hunting country to the notice of my readers. In the meantime I heartily pray for his health and happiness, and many successful seasons to come, for I "ne'er may look upon his like again."

Mr. Smith was succeeded in the Quorn country by Mr. Osbaldeston, who hunted it four seasons, when he resigned it to Sir Bellingham Graham, who kept it the next two. Mr. Osbaldeston now took it again (in 1823), and retained possession of it till Lord Southampton became master of it in 1828, which brings me to the verge of present times. His lordship's reign was but a short one, having professedly come forward only until some more fit person could be found to take his place, and 1831 was the *last season of the Quorn hounds*.

Indeed previously to his retirement, Lord Southampton had removed the hounds from Quorndon, to a new kennel which he built at the Humberstone Gate, in the town of Leicester, from whence they were again removed by Sir Harry Goodricke to another new set at Thrussington, a few miles from Melton Mowbray, and they were then known by the name of "Sir Harry Goodricke's hounds," though of course they hunted the Quorn country.

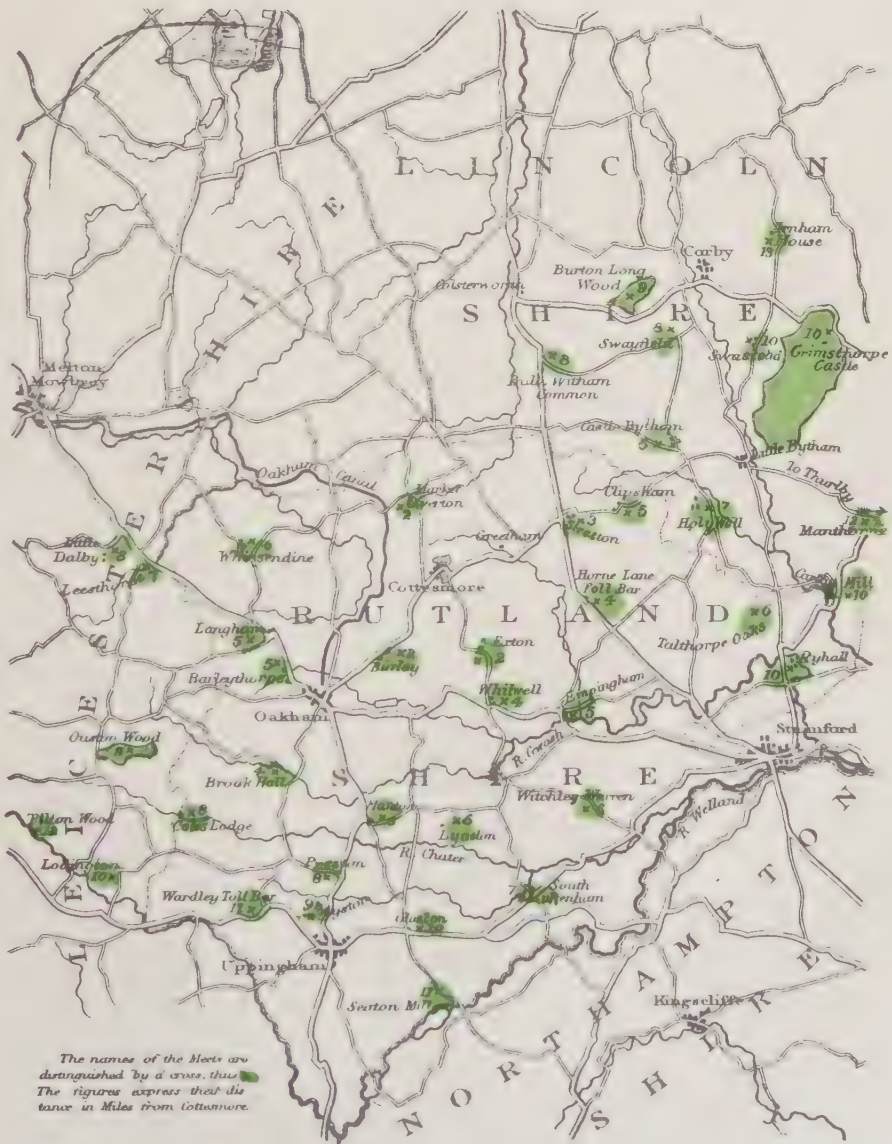
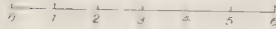
When Mr. Osbaldeston commenced his career in Leicestershire, his hounds were hunted by Tom. Sebright, afterwards in the service of Earl Fitzwilliam ;

and it is but fair to presume that some of the well-stored maxims of that celebrated huntsman laid the foundation of Mr. Osbaldeston's fame, both in the kennel and the field. It is the duty of the historian, no matter what the subject, to speak the truth, and I hesitate not to say, that for some seasons after Sebright left him, Mr. Osbaldeston needed his assistance in the field when difficulties presented themselves beyond his mark ; and the absence of such assistance was very generally lamented. But what will not zeal and perseverance effect ? That best of all masters, experience, by which the preceptor had benefitted, at length told upon the pupil, and for some years past Mr. Osbaldeston has been acknowledged as a judicious clever huntsman, and in every way qualified for the arduous duties of that situation. It has been the fashion to decry him as being too precipitate in his judgment, in the trying difficulties of the chase ; but much as I would recommend the calm exercise of our faculties on all perplexing occasions, I consider *quickness of decision* the life and soul of fox-hunting. A fox *instantly* recovered is worth recovering in Leicestershire, with two hundred men in the field ; the stumbling upon him by the time he has got two miles a-head of the pack is only productive of mischief. Hounds are ridden over—pressed upon they are sure to be—confusion arises, and as a fresh fox is always at hand, that is the best cure for the disappointment. Add to this—no illiberal reflections are then abroad in the evening, all that is said amounting to this—“D—d unlucky losing that first fox ; very pretty whilst it lasted, *the Squire's cast no doubt was right* ; but depend upon it he was headed by that shepherd and his dog.” “But why did he not try back,” asks one of the old school, not used to so fast a country ; “I think *by the crows* he's gone over yonder hill.” “*Very likely, sir,*” says Jack Stephens, as he holds a gate open for the hounds, who are on their road to Shancton Holt, where they are sure to find in ten minutes.

It would be an act of great injustice to so celebrated a sportsman as Mr. Osbaldeston, not to give him all the credit due to him in the arduous and trying situation of master of hounds and huntsman, especially in Leicestershire, where difficulties of no common occurrence are to be encountered. That the gentleman in question possesses the most essential qualifications for this station, such as untiring zeal, prodigious bodily strength equal to any exertion to which the human frame is put, is very generally allowed, and his knowledge of the animal, *hound*, is equal to that of any man that ever bred or possessed one. On this subject no more need be said ; but it is in the character of a huntsman that an equal share of perfection has not altogether been allowed him. In fact it has been often remarked in my presence, that as regarded hunting hounds, the “Squire,” as he is called, never made but one fatal mistake, and that was, in not keeping Sebright as his huntsman.

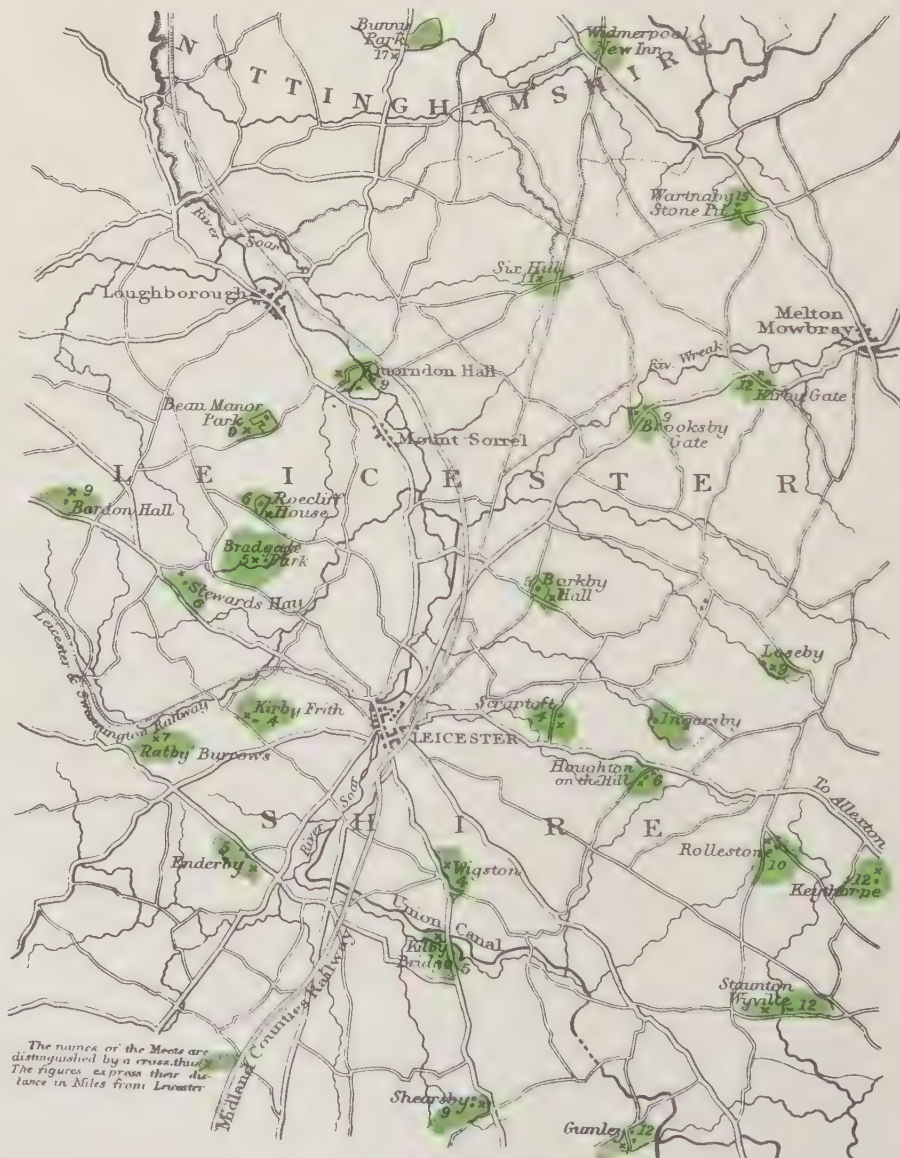
MAP OF THE VARIOUS MEETS OF THE COTTESMORE HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



MAP OF THE
VARIOUS MEETS
OF THE
QUORN
HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



The names of the Meets are distinguished by a cross, thus: The figures express their distance in Miles from Leicester.

If he (the Squire) had bred the hounds, and Sebright had hunted them, they seemed to think perfection would have been attained.

But how happened it that superiority should be allowed to the servant over his master? The answer is given in a few words. Like the late Lord Middleton, Mr. Osbaldeston wanted a little more command of temper than he was wont to display in the field,—not towards the field, because in this case that is a minor consideration; but it was when opposed by untoward circumstances, that his would break loose to his discomf ure, and often to the destruction of his sport. My experience has convinced me, that in all that relates to hunting—whether to hunting hounds or to riding after them—coolness is nothing short of an essential, and I have yet to see a man whose temper is flurried do either to perfection. Who brought his hounds to cover in better condition than the Squire did? who found his fox in a more sportsman-like style? who need ride nearer to them in the burst? who, I may add, made a more judicious *first* cast, or if nothing very trying occurred, who went on more correctly and successfully to the finish? But in fox-hunting, things do not always go on smoothly; on the contrary, in no pursuit are there more chances of interruptions, if not fatal accidents, to mar the proceedings of the day, however auspiciously commenced. Here then was the bar to perfection in Mr. Osbaldeston, as a huntsman—his zealous temper could not brook a succession of those casualties which will arise in fox-hunting, so many causes producing them, and it too often happened, that when he lost his temper, he lost his fox.

Mr. Osbaldeston is much of my opinion respecting the use or rather the *necessity* of blood, to ensure hounds doing well in the field. He agrees with me, that weather has very much more to do with the business, and that hounds will never be slack with a good scent if they are well bred. He himself told me, that the best week's sport he had had up to the time at which he made the remark, was after his hounds had been out nine times without getting blood.

In his calling as a huntsman, Mr. Osbaldeston had a great advantage in the untiring nature of his constitution. Whilst hunting his hounds six days a week, neither his spirit nor his strength appeared in the least subdued, and I remember whilst on a visit to him at Quorn, when he was doing this, that he did not retire to rest until an hour or two after midnight. I also recollect asking him whether he would go in his stanhope to Widmerpool (which was the fixture) as the road was good? “Oh no,” was his reply, “there is nothing like the pig-skin,” so we rode.

As a horseman, both over a country and over a course, I consider Mr. Osbaldeston quite first-rate, although since the compound fracture of his leg (which I witnessed) he has appeared not so much at his ease as he was wont to be, when any of the field were following him to a fence.

Mr. Osbaldeston did honour to fox-hunting, and I wish he were now in the field again. Lord Cardigan offered, at the end of the last season but two, to subscribe a thousand pounds per annum towards his expenses if he hunted Northamptonshire, provided he himself could have the country, if he wished to have it, at the end of three years ; but there being a hitch amongst the gentlemen of the shire, respecting the remainder of the subscription, the thing fell to the ground. I have reason to believe better sport was never shown in the Pytchley country than during the period of its being hunted by Mr. Osbaldeston.

As a breeder of hounds, Mr. Osbaldeston has raised himself to the very pinnacle of fame. It is universally admitted that no man understands the system of breeding the modern fox-hound more perfectly than he does, and this point is settled by one peep into his kennel. He has a most correct eye to the sort of hound that can not only go, but maintain *the pace*, and there cannot be a doubt but his blood will be in repute for generations to come.

It is doubly kind in all-dispensing Providence to accompany a prevailing passion for any laborious amusement with the physical powers to pursue it to the dregs. Such is assuredly Mr. Osbaldeston's case, and his performances in the saddle entitle him to the appellation of the "modern Hercules" of these times. I thought he had done more than man ought to do when he hunted his hounds six days a week, in such a trying country as Leicestershire ; but his nerve and pluck have no bounds, and his strength is equal to all his ardour. It has been jocosely said of him, that he must be "copper-bottomed," or he could never have stood all this work in the saddle, alluding no doubt to his feat at Newmarket. But I wish to give him no super-human advantages. He is a fine specimen of the pluck and muscle peculiar to Englishmen—*multum in parvo*—*a rara avis*—in short we know not what—so sing with Pope—

"For works like these, let deathless journals tell,
None but thyself can be thy parallel!"

That Leicestershire has advantages as a hunting country which it would be vain to look for in others—at least to a great extent—it is useless to assert, because the fame of it has been established for the last hundred years ; but were I to contend that it has not its disadvantages also, I should betray a want of experience in it, which would materially detract from my credibility. I will commence then with the former.

Nothing is more inimical to scent than frequent variations of soil, and even admitting the nature of the soil to be pretty nearly the same, yet so far as hunting is concerned, the quality of it is materially altered by being put under the operation

of the plough. Perhaps the effects of the variation of soil cannot be more satisfactorily appreciated than by a Warwickshire sportsman, who has witnessed hounds running their fox with a breast high scent over the Warwickshire Vale, but has perceived a great falling off in pace when they have ascended the Oxfordshire hills. The vast quantity of old maiden turf then, with which the county of Leicester abounds, is greatly in favour of hounds, and the general fine quality of the land, so well attested by the occupiers of it, for the purpose of producing beef, is highly beneficial to scent. Amongst the mysteries that attend that phenomenon, this fact may be relied on—nor would it be difficult to illustrate it to the comprehension of a not highly gifted individual. Upon mere mechanical principles indeed, hounds at one moment streaming over a meadow, and the next crossing a greasy fallow, sticking to their feet like birdlime, and greatly depressing their powers, must experience a great difference between countries. The covers in Leicestershire also being for the most part small, hounds get quickly away after their fox, and from the number of rails that are used in the fences, they are not often stopped, by measuring the hedges, which is a considerable impediment to speed in most of the inferior countries. Their travelling to and from the places of meeting is also good, being generally along bridle roads, or through fields—it being no uncommon sight in Leicestershire to see a guide-post stuck up in the middle of a large field—perhaps of sixty acres or upwards—without any beaten track leading to it. I may also add the well-known fact, that in inferior countries, where the plough prevails over grass, hunting is over at least a month sooner than in Leicestershire.—When the dust of March, so prized by the farmer, flies over the fallows, it is all up with any certainty of sport.

The disadvantages of Leicestershire are these. In the first place, the immense crowds that attend hounds after Christmas at their favourite places of meeting, and consequently at those best adapted to afford sport, is much against sport. In fact, hounds that hunt Leicestershire require almost an experience of the country before they can excel in chase. They must learn to disregard the pressure of horses, as Mr. Osbaldeston's pack did, and the Belvoir do, or they will often be driven over the scent. This is also chiefly fatal at the most perplexing period—the first two or three fields after the fox has got away, and before the hounds have packed, or settled well to the scent. To the huntsman likewise, Leicestershire presents difficulties unknown in other countries. The stain of sheep we well know is bad enough for hounds, but that of *cattle* is worse. Such is the strength of the land in this county, that a considerable quantity of the latter are abroad throughout the winter, and herds of them frequently obstruct the smooth proceedings of the chase. The huntsman is often greatly posed in making his casts, when hounds throw up in

the middle of a large Leicestershire ground. In more enclosed countries, he has generally something near at hand to guide him, whereas here he may be said to be "at sea." If his hounds cannot make it out without his assistance, he is often at a loss for his point. The number of artificial covers induce his foxes to run short, therefore he can only make a faint guess at his line. If then he should trot his hounds away to one headland of this large ground, with the hope of hitting off his fox at his meuse, and he should have made his escape at the one opposite to it, enough time will be lost to enable a flyer to get two miles ahead of his pursuers, and very few "hunting days," as they are called, are good enough to allow of this. The evils, however, which occasionally result from the great size of the Leicestershire enclosures, are more than compensated by the beautiful exhibition they afford to the eye of the sportsman, of hounds in chase—such as no other country under the sun can display. Its undulating surface—for it is quite a mistake to call this a flat country—also assists here, and a perfect panorama of hounds in chase is often exhibited in a run, to the inexpressible delight of the truly enthusiastic sportsman.

Many persons object to Leicestershire on account of the great crowd ; and truly this objection has its weight, as it increases the perils of the field, by no means inconsiderable of themselves. At times the rush of the horsemen at starting is little less than awful, and nerves of the stoutest manufacture must feel some impression, when, if your horse should not clear the fence you are then riding at, you are almost certain to be ridden over by one, if not more of the field. I repeat, it is some trial of nerve to look before us at a strong blackthorn hedge, five or six feet high, with a rail or wide ditch to boot, and "who knows what," on the other side ; but still more so, if at this time we look *behind us*, and see two or three of our friends running away with their horses, or their horses running away with them—for the difference matters not—roaring out at the top of their voices, "Go along, sir ; pray go along ! we shall be left half a mile behind ! ! !"

There are other objections to Leicestershire which hold good with many, and these are—the strength of the fences, and, as it is technically termed, the "severity" of the country to horses, particularly on the Harborough side. To a certain description of sportsmen these objections may be deemed insurmountable ; namely, to those with weak stables and still weaker nerves. It is quite true that there are fences in this country to be encountered in every run, which, if cleared, take a great deal out of a horse, and if not cleared, bang and bruise his legs, if they do not give him a fall ; but they possess one advantage which is too often denied to those of the rural countries. This consists in the sound nature of the ground from which the horse takes his spring ; and I well remember the advice of a good old sportsman, who rode harder in his seventieth year than many do in their thirtieth. "When



THE LEICESTERSHIRE STEEPLECHASE: Mr. Field Nicholson on Magic, defeats King of the Valley, ridden by Dick Christian. From a print after HENRY ALKEN, lent by Messrs. Fores.

your horse gets weak in a run," said he, "don't look for the weakest place in the fence, as too many are apt to do, but look to that where the ground is good for your horse to rise from." Doubtless he was right ; for without a proper fulcrum the exertion of leaping is doubled, and as horses become exhausted they are more given to become careless. Another advantage also accompanies Leicestershire fences—they are all planted on the ground, consequently the horse is not under the necessity of trusting to the ticklish security of a bank or cop to spring from, which if it gives way with his weight is nearly certain to get him into a difficulty. Moreover, such fences can never be taken in stroke, which the fences in Leicestershire are, or the horses could never live with the hounds. The formidable ox-fence is the worst obstacle to a horse crossing Leicestershire.

Good timber-leapers are essential in Leicestershire, as almost every fourth fence in a run is one of this description ; and thus is the fact accounted for, namely, when any part of a hedge becomes weak it is necessary to guard it with a rail until it recovers its strength ; for in the fly-season what would be considered a good fence in most other countries is of no avail in Leicestershire, where so many large bullocks are fed. In the Harborough country there are some awkward ravines or dingles, which, unless it be to those who know them well, are the severest obstacles to a man riding over Leicestershire.

I hear some people speak lightly of the brooks in Leicestershire ; but judging of them from experience, and having found myself at the bottom of some of them, and on good water-jumpers too, I am not of this opinion. The Whissendine and the Smite are always difficult, even when time is allowed to make choice of a particular part, where the banks may approach each other and be sound ; but when taken as they come—that is, in chase, when hounds are running hard, and there is no time to look—the odds are that a horse must clear more than twenty feet to get over them. There are other brooks besides these, namely, the Burton Brook, the Stanten Brook—one under Norton by Galby, another near Woodwell Head cover, and one under the Coplow. The river Soar, which passes by Leicester, and Mount Sorrell (or Mount Soar Hill, as it was called once), and runs through the grounds of Quorndon Hall ; and the river Welland, which divides the counties of Leicester, Northampton, and Rutland, cannot be leaped by horses ; although Mr. T. Assheton Smith once charged the latter at the end of one of the most desperate runs ever known in Leicestershire.

As the Soar takes its course from the Trent, it is seldom an interruption to hounds hunting the better part of Leicestershire ; neither are the Wreake, or Wrekin, as Camden calls it—which passes through Melton to the Soar—nor the canal which also passes through Melton, much regarded by sportsmen, as they very

rarely meet with them. Not one horse in ten, however good in some countries, would be able to do the trick in Leicestershire. In the first place, if he had been accustomed to the neat little plashed or pleached hedges, however awkward, which most countries are fenced with, he would never face the strong thorns which Leicestershire horses make their way through. Indeed, it is much doubted whether his rider would like them, until somewhat reconciled to them by experience. Several hunting countries also, are almost entirely destitute of brooks ; and unless a hunter be a brook-jumper, he is no horse for the country I am now speaking of. The high ridge and furrow of the old grazing grounds are likewise extremely distressing to horses—especially to those whose form will not admit of their passing over them smoothly. Neither are the ant-hills to be thought lightly of, as they require that sort of sound commanding action which, although very difficult to procure, is indispensable to enable a horse to gallop over them quickly and at the same time with safety to his rider. Let a horse go for half an hour in the first flight in a quick thing, and then go well over Tilton-field, and leap an ox-fence out of it, *the day has been* when five hundred pounds would have been as ready for him as five hundred shillings for a cart-horse *supposed* to be worth a pound or two more at a fair.

Alluding to better days—to those when agriculture flourished, and, consequently, money abounded—it was grateful to the eye of a sportsman to behold the prosperous condition of the Leicestershire grazier. He had generally four, and often more, good hunters in his stable, and his domestic comforts were usually on a par with his stud. Since the days of Meynell he has been highly respected at the cover side, and to persons of his class is the fox-hunting of Leicestershire very powerfully indebted—the preservation of foxes being chiefly in their hands, in consequence of the small number of large landed proprietors taking any interest in fox-hunting. There are, however, your Oldacres, your Thomlins, your Heycocks, and many others whose pockets have stood proof against the ruin which has overwhelmed their neighbours, but the shock has been too severe for most of them, and their means must be greatly diminished.

A grazier, on a large scale, is *entitled* to the means of amusing himself, for the considerable sum he has at work in his stock ; and more than this, if hunting be to his taste, his business suffers nothing by his pursuit of it as compared with the plough-farmer ; he has nothing to do in the dead winter months that cannot be accomplished before he mounts his horse to go to cover. It is true, he has fairs to attend, but they do not commence till spring, and then his business at these fairs begins so early, and hounds throw off so late, that there is plenty of time for a grazier to buy fifty head of cattle in the morning, and then canter away to his hounds.

The great Meynell generally paid the graziers the compliment of giving them half an hour's law when he knew that there was a fair in the neighbourhood.

I will now look at some of the covers, beginning with the Quorn country, and I suppose I must start from the Coplow, it having been immortalized in song. It stands in a very commanding situation, a small distance from the village, in the centre of an unrivalled grass country, and is always a sure find. A grove of trees contributes to its ornament ; but the pleasing object to the sportsman is the fine gorse with which it is covered, and its truly fox-hunting appearance. Were a foreigner to visit England for the purpose of seeing what he can see nowhere else—that is, fox-hunting in perfection—I should wish him to see a fox well found at Billesdon Coplow, and killed at Ranksborough Gorse. The most fertile imagination of the most enthusiastic sportsman upon earth could not picture to itself any thing finer than this. Although it is now the month of July, and the hounds are basking in the sun or creeping under the shade of the benches, I can fancy I see them, streaming away, with their heads up, and sterns down, over Tilton Great Fields, making for Lozeby Gorse, but turning to the right for Somerby, never turning again until they turn up their fox in the road just below the gorse. This would occupy about an hour, and such an hour !

“ Oh, hour of bliss !
To equal this
Diana strove in vain ;
Thrice happy man,
Who, *in the van*,
His place can well maintain.”

In 1826, Mr. Osbaldeston had a magnificent burst of forty-eight minutes, *without a check*, from this famous cover, passing over the fine lordships of Norton by Galby, and Oadby, and killing his fox at Wigston, in the presence of *only seven of a large field ! !*

Ashby Pasture is a splendid fixture, and for a dozen miles in any direction hounds cannot go wrong from it. Indeed, thence to Cotsmore, Woodwell Head, or Sewstern, the very cream of the country is before us. Cream Lodge Gorse, near Great Dalby, and also close to the Pasture, is one of the most favourable meets—and a noble piece of gorse did I see there before it was burnt down ; but Glen Gorse, on the road to Harborough—likewise a renowned fixture—is nearly the strongest cover I ever saw hounds draw. Indeed, it is almost inaccessible to them, and foxes have been found difficult to get away from it. Oadby Toll-bar, four miles from Leicester, on the same road, is also in great repute from the excellence of the surrounding country ; and Kirby Gate, on the Leicester and Melton road,

is remarkable for being the first meet in the season—namely, on the first Monday in November.

Ashby Pasture is in the parish of Great Dalby, in the very heart of the grass country, and far away from a town. From Great Dalby to Tilton was the ground fixed upon for the great Steeple Chase between Clasher and Clinker—the former ridden by Mr. Osbaldeston (his owner), and the latter by Dick Christian ; and a better five miles can scarcely be found in the county. The ancient Leicestershire family of the Noels were domiciled at Great Dalby in very early days. From Ashby Pasture to Syston is a beautiful burst. Lord Aylesford's Cover, near Thrussington Wolds, is a good place, and capable of showing a fine run into the Duke's country.

Barkby Holt, near the village of Beeby, the property of Mr. Potchin, is a very favourite meet ; this is also a cover of some extent, and a sure find. From thence to the Coplow, about five miles—and such five miles as no other country can show, exhibiting each variety of ground to try the powers of a horse,—was chosen for the great Steeple Match between Lord Kennedy's Radical and Captain Ross's Clinker, and was also, some years back, the scene of a Sweepstakes between the late Lord Forester, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, and Mr. Charles Meynell, who won it.

Baggrave Spiny,* not far from Barkby Holt, is a capital place. Five years ago Lord Lonsdale found his second fox, a good old-fashioned *woodland* gentleman, in Loddington Reddish, and went straight away for Baggrave Spiny, and Lozeby Plantations, without a check. Sir Harry Goodricke, and the well-known yeoman, Mr. Heycock, particularly distinguished themselves in this tremendous burst ; and the day's sport concluded with killing the fox in a truly workmanlike style, at the end of three hours and upwards, near to the town of Uppingham. Mr. Osbaldeston had likewise one of his best days from Barkby Holt. The fox came right away for Tilton, but did not enter the wood ; and after skirting Laundwood also, he faced the open for Somerby, and was killed close to Cold Orton (or Overton), after one hour, and fifty-eight minutes.

Bunny Wood, Notts, is in rather a rough country, but a sure find, being the property of that good sportsman, Lord Rancliffe. Debdale Gorse and Bunny Decoy are in the draw, from whence foxes generally go for the Widmerpool Covers, Gotham Wood, or Normanton.

Burdett's cover (Sir Francis's), under Burrow Hills, has a capital country about it, and was made by the worthy Baronet whose name it bears ; for many

* The word Spiny, as denoting a cover, is peculiar to Leicestershire and one or two other countries. It may be traced to the Latin word *spina*, a thorn ; and Johnson gives the adjective "spiny, thorny."

years a great supporter of the hunt, and one of its boldest riders. This cover showed one brilliant run. The fox went straight away over Burrow Hill by Little Dalby, down to the Oakham Road, when he was headed. He returned over Burrow Hill, leaving Great Dalby to the right, Burrow Town to the left, by Knossington to Owston Wood. One hour and thirty minutes over a very severe country, and all the horses had enough of it.

Cream Lodge Gorse is one of the largest and strongest gorse covers in the Quorn hunt, extending over upwards of twenty acres. It was wilfully set fire to a few years back, but is now all the better for it. The following interesting run from the gorse took place in Mr. Osbaldeston's time :—A fox stole away, and being viewed by the hounds as they came up to the cover, they got well away with it. He skirted Ashby Pasture to Thorpe Thrussells, near to Thorpe Satchville, over Burrow Hill, and away to Adcock's Barn. He there made a short turn to the left, nearly in the face of the crowd, and passing over the fine lordship of Great Dalby, was run into, in the middle of a field of nearly one hundred acres, between Melton and Kirby (Sir F. Burdett's), after a dashing burst of exactly forty minutes. The kill was an extraordinary one ; Dick Burton, then whipper-in to Mr. Osbaldeston, was with his hounds, and viewed the fox before them for rather more than a mile. He saw him cross the road near to the village of Burton, when he entered the field in which he was killed ; and when he got into the middle of it, he laid down, and coiled himself up like a lap-dog before a parlour fire. But the story does not end here. Three couples of hounds which were somewhat a-head of the pack, dashed over him without his stirring : when the main body came up and killed him.

Glen Gorse is a very crack place, the meet being generally at Oadby Toll Bar, four miles from Leicester on the Harborough road, and attended by many of the surrounding hunts. It is a magnificent piece of gorse, and a sure find ; but business is apt to be disturbed by foot people, the neighbouring population being numerous and manufacturing, and they steal away on this occasion from their stocking frames, " to see what is to be seen." Foxes run from this gorse over the finest part of the Harborough country, as well as occasionally to Enderby or Tooley. It is a beautiful burst from Glen Gorse to the Coplow, not an unusual line. Greene's Gorse is the next draw in general, should a fox not get well away from Glen. Glen Gorse has afforded several capital runs, but one which particularly merits notice, being the third severe thing on the same day. The following is a correct account of it from an eye witness :—" Met Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds at Mowesley, found at Laughton Hills ; came away for Gumley, leaving Laughton and Mowesley to the left, and lost him at Fleckney Town, after a beautiful burst of twenty-five

minutes, without a check. Found a fresh fox in Fleckney Gorse, came well away with him on the left of Fleckney and Wiston, to Glen Gorse, leaving it on the right by Stretton Hall, and lost him at Houghton, forty-five minutes, very fast. Found a third fox in Glen Gorse, ran him in cover for an hour, broke away by Oadby and Weston, leaving Kilby on the right, through Fleckney Gorse, leaving Shearsby Gorse to the left, by John Ball cover, crossed the Welford road by Shearsby Town, to the right of Great Peatling. The hounds were stopped at Willoughby Waterless, *after a run of one hour and fifty minutes*, with their last fox. All the horses beat but Mr. Osbaldeston's Yorkshire Stingo, who carried him through the whole of the day, and was the only horse in the field at last."

John Ball Cover, near Shearsby, is a very favourite fixture in the Harborough country. This cover was made under the direction of Mr. Oldacre, a most respectable yeoman, residing between Leicester and Melton, under whose superintendency several others have been made. By his care in preparing and clearing the ground previously to the seed being drilled, and keeping the plants clean by the use of the hoe, they generally held foxes the second year; and a handsome Silver Cup was presented to Mr. Oldacre for his exertions. In addition to this mark of approbation, some of the principal gentlemen of the hunt attended the christening of one of his children, and stood as sponsors.

Shoby Scholes shows fine runs into Lord Forester's country, &c. This fixture is rendered memorable from a tremendous run in the great Meynell's time, on the first hunting day of the season. The *burst* was to Frisby Gorse; but after passing over the fine—nay, unequalled—lordship of Gaddesby, Great Dalby, Queenborough, and Syston, the fox was killed close to Mount Sorrell. Those who saw it have asserted that Mr. Meynell, on his favourite grey horse, and his celebrated hound Champion, equally distinguished themselves on that day.

Widmerpool Inn, a small public house, ten miles from Melton, on the Nottingham road; is not a popular fixture, but the numerous gorses about it are fine, with good rides in them, and they are a preserve for foxes in the surrounding covers. Foxes from the Segg's Hill country, &c. often come here, showing excellent runs. Just above Widmerpool, however, the country is rough and deep in the winter, and very sticky for horses in the spring, consequently not a great favourite with the Melton gentlemen. It is, however, a good spring hunting country.

The forest of Charnwood, which formerly extended to Loughborough, is a valuable acquisition to the Quorn country, for spring and autumn hunting, being about twenty miles in circumference, and for the most part excellent scenting ground. When approached, however, by a modern sportsman, who has just been sailing over the green sward of the Melton and Harborough countries, there is

something about the forest covers appalling, if not disgusting ; but with a good pack of hounds and an active huntsman, foxes are got away from them beyond all expectation, and many fine runs have been seen with the Quorn hounds from Charnwood Forest. In one respect, indeed, it has the advantage of the grazing districts of Leicestershire, in that the surrounding country is free from three curses to which they are every day subject—namely, the stain of cattle and sheep, shepherds, and their dogs. Nothing is more puzzling to young ones—indeed, to old ones also—than the former evil, and the latter often cuts up short when nothing else could mar it. Some parts of this forest, however, are very bad to ride over, on account of the large stones which abound in them ; and it was here that Dick Burton got his bad fall when whipping-in to Mr. Osbaldeston. Foxes, however, oftener take a better line, pointing for Quorn.

My readers at home are no doubt aware of the nature of the Leicestershire covers ; but those in distant countries, of whom I am happy to say I boast a large share, may not possess any knowledge of them. I must therefore inform them that, in the Quorn, and Lord Forester's countries, they are chiefly gorse covers, and in Lord Lonsdale's about an equal number of gorse covers and woods. In the Quorn country, between seven and eight hundred pounds per annum are paid in rent for the ground the gorse covers occupy ; and other expenses are incurred in the preservation of them during the summer months. There are likewise some artificial covers in the Quorn country which answer tolerably well, but hounds do not draw them kindly. They are formed by planting live blackthorn stakes, which are plashed down within two feet of the ground. Long rough grass soon grows over and covers them, affording a secure kennel to a fox. The ground should face the south, to have the advantage of the sun, and the extent of it should not be under three acres. William Craddock, Esq., of Sanford Hall, near Loughborough, a good old sportsman, kindly superintends the preservation of the covers in the Quorn country.

There are woods and spinies in the Quorn country ; but with the exception of those in the immediate vicinity of the forest, they do not exceed a hundred acres in extent. Indeed Camden speaks of Leicestershire as being "all a champaign country, rich in corn and grain, but the greatest part of it deficient in wood." If such were the case in the time of Camden, who has been more than two hundred years in his grave, of course there is much less wood now. Indeed, according to his map of the county, Dalby Wood appears to be the only one worthy his notice in any part of the Quorn country, with the exception of Charnwood and Leicester Forests, the latter of which no longer exists.

Northstoke Wood, at the one hundred and fourth milestone on the great road

from London to Grantham, was one of the favourite meets with the Duke of Rutland when he slept at the Black Bull at Witham Common (as he used to do), on the road from London. This cover was the property of a gentleman of the name of Turner, of North Stoke, now deceased, an excellent friend to fox-hunting. And hereon hangeth a tale. The late Lord Huntingtower, who, despite his name, as the world knows, was no friend to fox-hunting, lived near this worthy old gentleman, and wished him to cut down some trees which obstructed a fine view from his windows, though at three miles distance from him. Mr. Turner objected, but his lordship was not to be disappointed. "Accordingly," as the old women say, he sent a great number of men with hatchets, &c., and down came the trees whilst the Squire was at church. Of course the punishment was a severe one, and too well known to our readers to need a repetition here ; but "never mind that," said his lordship—" *he can't put the trees in their places again.*"

At Stubton, the seat of Sir Robert Heron, between Grantham and Newark, there is a noble gorse cover. The sportsman who meets hounds at Stubton Gorse must possess two essentials—namely an accomplished fencer and a stout heart. Perhaps no part of the country is more strong, and a peculiar sort of fence is made in it. It consists of a plashed hedge, of more than usual strength, *with a wide ditch on each side of it* ; a stranger would wonder how the horses get over them at all without either injury or falls. Fortunately there is a good deal of timber, which, though high and strong, is preferable to those raspers, the blackthorn being remarkably strong in this deep soil.

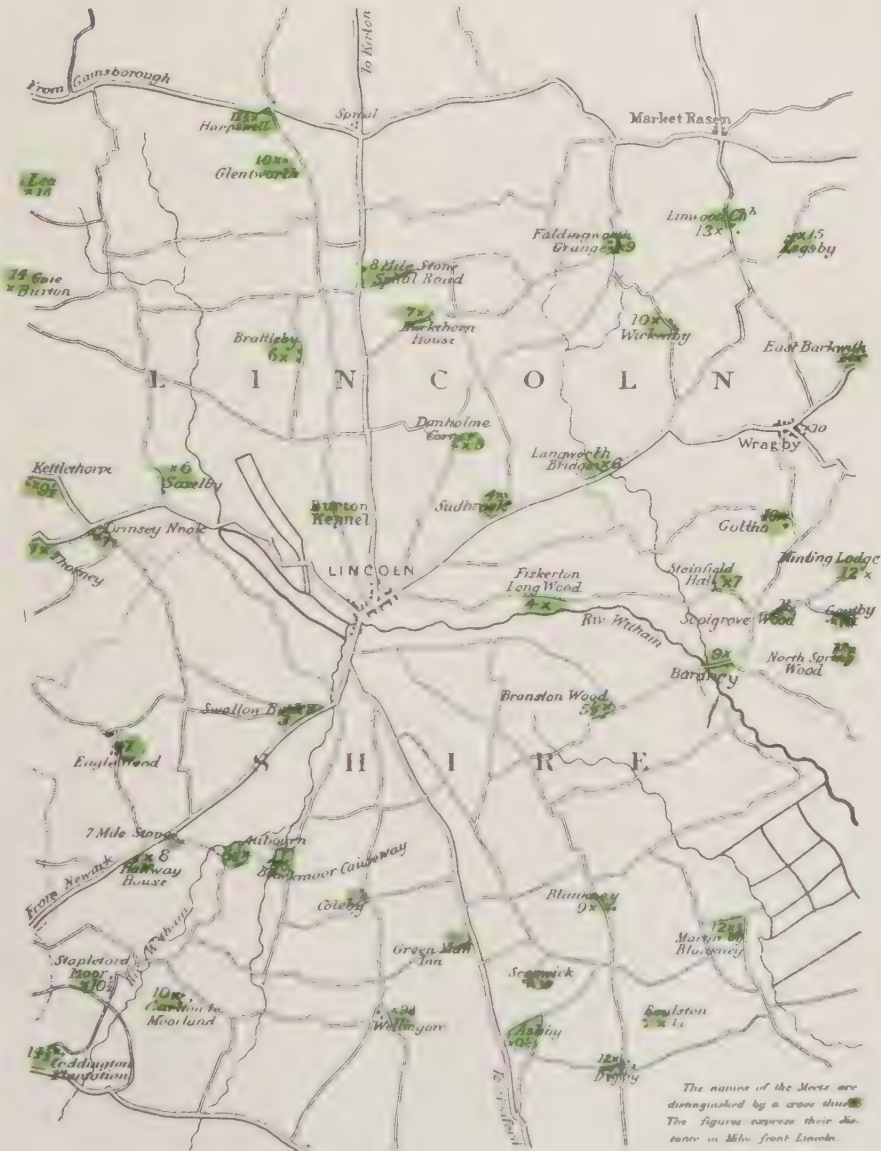
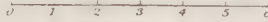
Few countries can show finer woodlands than those in Lord Forester's hunt, and most excellent sport have they afforded for a long series of years.

My readers abroad must feel intense interest respecting so celebrated a pack as these of which I am now speaking, and also of the late noble possessor of them. It is then my duty to inform them that the Duke of Rutland kept his fox-hounds on a scale of great magnificence for thirty-three seasons, and then resigned them to his nephew, Lord Forester, with the accompanying compliment of £1,200 per annum towards the expenses of them.* But his Grace does all things with a munificent hand ; and the magnificence and hospitality of Belvoir Castle in the hunting season, has exceeded, I believe, even the magnificence and hospitality of English nobility itself. In short, I have reason to think it was unique ; and what boundless benefits must the surrounding country have experienced from the disbursements of such a large and splendid establishment ! Were there half a score of Belvoir Castles in every county in England, provincial and rural suffering would be at an end. Of the castle my limits will not allow me to say more than that it

* Hounds have been kept at Belvoir Castle for at least a century.

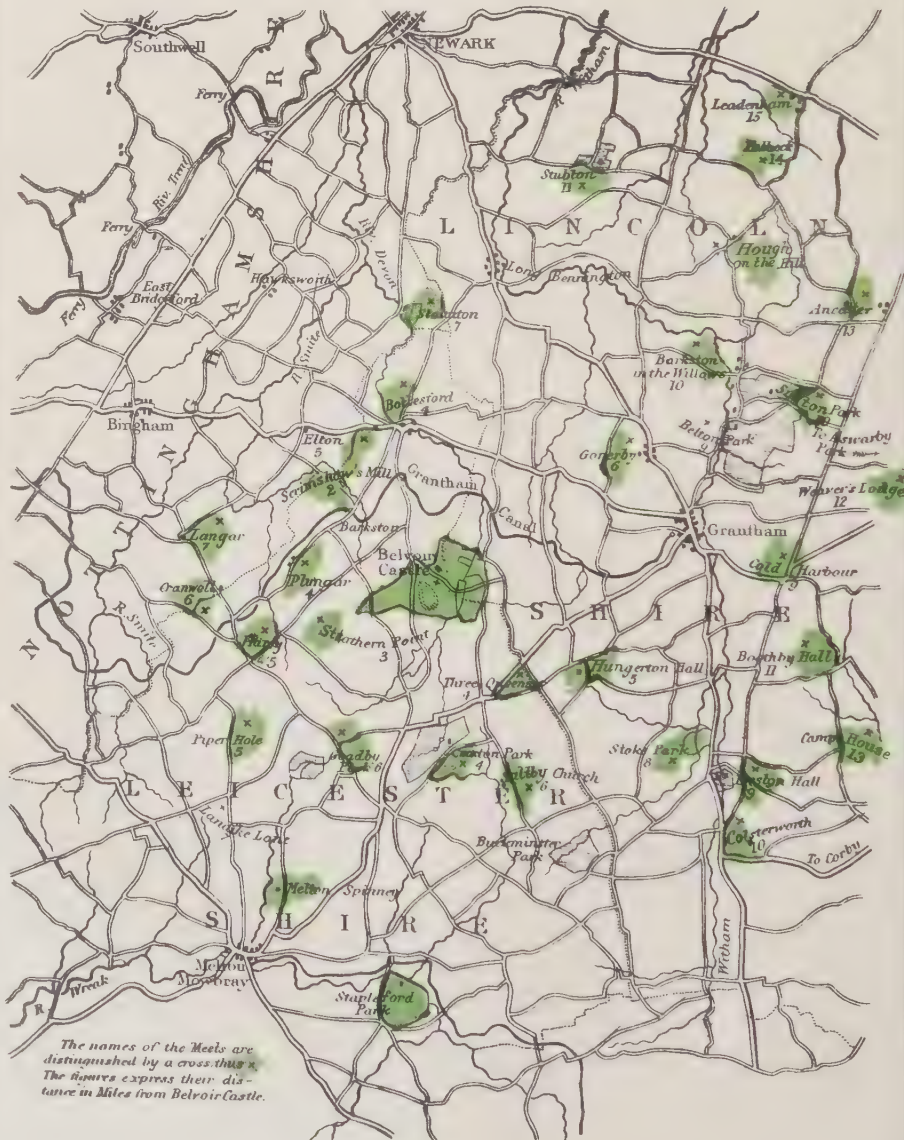
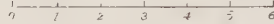
MAP OF THE MEETS OF THE BURTON HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



MAP OF THE
VARIOUS MEETS
OF THE
BELVOIR
HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



The names of the Meets are distinguished by a cross, thus x. The figures express their distance in Miles from Belvoir Castle.

is one of the most extensive of our baronial residences, and every way worthy of the noble estates which are attached to it.

The situation is bold and commanding ; and it has been asserted that his Grace can look over from twenty to thirty thousand acres of his own land from the tower which forms so grand a feature in the building. It is situated in the county of Leicester, but so close to the extremity of it that the stables are in the county of Lincoln. A considerable range of stabling, and houses for the accommodation of grooms and helpers belonging to the visitors at Belvoir, are also outside the park, as it would have required the revenue of a principality to have maintained such a host at the castle. The Duke has retired from the hunting field.

The following are the most distinguished places of meeting in Lord Lonsdale's country :—Woodwell Head, Wymondham Pasture, Barley Gorses, Gunthorpe Gorse, Whitwell Gorse, Blaston Pasture, Cole's Lodge, Wing Gorses, Ayston Gorses, the Punch Bowl, Ranksborough Gorse, Laund Wood, Tilton Wood, Burrow Gorses, Ram Jam, Cottesmore Gorse, Gibbet Gorse, Loddington, Reddish Wood, Berry Gorse, Little Dalby, and Burton Gorse.

Among the above are some of the very best fixtures in Leicestershire, but the greater part are in Rutlandshire. Woodwell Head, perhaps, stands first, as it may be said to be splendidly situated for hounds, being in the midst of a champaign grazing district, in which, if a fox once gets out of cover, he must fly for his life. From Woodwell Head to Goadby Park is a delightful burst, and such as no other country under the sun can show. In short, the Lordships of Teigh, Market Overton, Whissendine, &c., appear to have been laid out for fox-hunting. Foxes often run over the vale of Belvoir from Woodwell Head Cover.

Perhaps a finer cover in a finer country cannot well be found than Tilton Wood, in the Harborough country. To see a fox come "right well away," as Goosey used to say, boldly facing Skeffington Field or Newton Hills, cheers the heart of a sportsman, and makes the fast ones look about them. There is no more severe country in Leicestershire for horses than from Tilton Wood to Woodwell Head.

Ram Jam, a road-side public-house near Streeton, on the great North-road, about four miles from Witham Common, eight from Stamford, and about as far from Oakham, is a very celebrated fixture, and in an excellent country. It is on record that the word *entire*, as applied to porter in London, was imported from this place. The landlord was famous for his various sorts of beer, which he was very particular in mixing to suit the palates of his customers, and some of his mixtures much resembled porter. When this liquor, then, came into use in London, the brewers called it *entire*, to show that it was *not* a mixture.

Wymondham Pasture is another beautiful place for hounds. All the Teigh,

Whissendine, and Harborough country is open to it on one side, and the best part of the Melton country on the other.

Whitwell Gorse, four miles from Oakham, is also a favourite fixture. Barley Gorses, Cottesmore Gorse, Burrow Gorse, near Somerby, Gibbet Gorse, Wing Gorse, Burton Gorse, and the Punch Bowl, are likewise first-rate places in this far-famed country.

Cottesmore House, it must be remembered, is not in the county of Leicester, but in Rutland, and so indeed are the majority of Lord Lonsdale's fixtures. Cottesmore House was the property of Sir Gilbert Heathcote, who had a large estate around it—when times were good—say £10,000 per annum, within a ring fence. Sir Gilbert, be it remembered, was himself a master of fox-hounds.

With respect to the Earl of Lonsdale, few men are more respected as a sportsman and a gentleman, and almost all his family—male and female—have a turn for the noble science of fox-hunting. The Hon. Colonel Lowther, his lordship's son, is considered one of the best sportsmen and hardest riders of the present day. He takes an active part in the hunting establishment.

Having described to the best of my ability the principal fixtures of Lords Lonsdale and Forester's (late the Duke of Rutland's), and Sir Harry Goodricke's country (once the Quorn), it only remains for me to mention a few of the remaining covers in the county of Leicester hunted by other hounds.

Misterton and Stamford Hall Covers, in the neighbourhood of Lutterworth, belong to the Pytchley country. No covers in England are capable of showing finer runs than these. All the Harborough country, and the best part of it too, is open to a Misterton fox.

Mr. Applewhaite's hounds, in the Atherstone country, also have a few good fixtures in Leicestershire. Among them are the following : Sibson Wolds, Sutton Ambion, Welsborough Gorse, Market Bosworth, Orton Gorse near Twycross, Burbage Wood, Nailston Wiggs, Kirkby Mallory, Tooley Park, Gopsall (Lord Howe's), Lindley Gorse, near Atherstone, Shenton Gorse, Lindridge Wood, &c., and some excellent covers lately made at Elmsthorpe, Marston, and Dunton.

One of the most favourite covers now spoken of, is Burbage Wood, within three miles of Hinkly, on the road from Lutterworth. This fine cover, though of considerable extent, used to be a very uncertain draw, having never been properly preserved, and constantly shot in and disturbed ; but of late years it has been well stocked with foxes, under the superintendence of Major Jervis of the Leicester Militia, a good friend to the sport. It is impossible for a fox to take a bad line of country from Burbage Wood. To Weddington Wood indeed is indifferent. But if he puts his head for Tooley Park, or Enderby, Kirkby Mallory, or Bosworth,

Whetstone Gorse, or Glen, he takes us over as pleasant and gentlemanlike a country as the most fastidious would ask to ride over. A Combe Abbey fox (Lord Craven's) shows a capital thing over a good sporting country. There is generally a large assemblage of sportsmen when the Atherstone hounds meet at Burbage Wood, and a tickler for the nags is often experienced with a fox that can reach the forest.

Sutton Ambion is likewise a favourite fixture. Orton Gorse and Gopsall excellent ; and Market Bosworth inferior to none. There is always a large field at the latter place, and the fate of a fox is now often fixed on that very ground on which was once decided the fate of a crown.

I have now, I think, taken the circuit of this far-famed country, which shares its honours with no less than six packs of fox-hounds, viz., The Quorn, The Pytchley, Lord Lonsdale's, Lord Forester's, Mr. Dansey's, and Mr. Applewhaite's. That it never had its equal in advantages to hounds, and facilities to horsemen *who can ride to hounds*, is a fact too well known to dwell upon ; but that Leicestershire *now*, is not what Leicestershire *was*, is also a truth, to be lamented. The late Lord Forester has been heard to declare that time has been, when he could have sat on his horse at Melton Spiny, and, cast his eyes around from that commanding spot, without distinguishing a single ploughed field. The war-prices, however—wheat at a guinea per bushel, and other grain in proportion—altered the face of Leicestershire. A considerable part of the fine old green sward was turned up, and even now much of it remains under the plough. In the Vale of Belvoir, particularly, a greater alteration has been effected than in the Quorn and the Cottesmore countries—so much so indeed, that if a stranger were to make his debut in some parts of it, on his first visit to Melton, he might fancy himself deceived in the accounts he had received of it as a grass country.

In another respect, however, Leicestershire and the Vale have improved, and this is by the land being for the most part drained, which renders it easier for the horses, and more agreeable to their riders. I have heard of the deep and almost boggy state which some part—indeed great part—of Leicestershire was in, previously to the general adoption of the sougning system, from a few of those old sportsmen left, who hunted it in the former part of Mr. Meynell's time, when, with a very good scent, a horse was thought to have distinguished himself greatly if he could live twenty minutes with hounds, certainly not so fast as those of the present day.

At certain periods of the hunting season, however, Leicestershire and the Vale are at present sufficiently deep to stop nineteen horses out of twenty, when the pace is quick, and they are put along *at the pace*, with a few ox-fences in their way. Admitting all this, Leicestershire is, not the easiest, but certainly the pleasantest,

and the most gentlemanlike country—if I may be allowed such a term—to ride over, that can be found in the United Kingdom.

Having ridden over it myself, I may perhaps be allowed the attempt to describe “the sort of things,” as Mr. Brummell was used to say (when taking a wide latitude, in giving his opinion upon some things), and fancying myself well-mounted at Fleckney Gorse, repeat the description a very hard-riding Meltonian gave me a few days back, of a magnificent run from that cover. I make no apology for the language ; it may not be *à la Cicero*, nor quite equal to Demosthenes, but it is business-like, and, in parts, I think touching.

“I tallyhoed the fox away,” said he, “so of course got a good start. I was on a very quick one, nothing like the best in my stable ; in short, *only a five year old*, and not so wise as he should be ; but I had had a taste of him, and I could neither blow him nor *funk* him, for he would face any thing. When he was in training—which by the bye was only last year—he was a little queer in his temper, and he never appeared comfortable in a crowd, so that I always, when I could, took a line of my own with him.

“Our first fence this day was a flight of rails, with a yawning ditch on the further side, which I thought it was my luck to have the first fly at ; but, looking earnestly at the hounds, as every man should do, you know, I never saw young M—, who came right across me at the fence, and got a nasty sort of a fall (he told me afterwards, he could not hold his mare ; if so, all well ; if not, *it served him right*). I tried to stop the young thorough-bred one ; but he threw up his head, and it was ‘no go ;’ so, thinking my own the more valuable life of the two—I mean more valuable than young M—’s,—I let him go, and all I saw of young M—, was his mare’s belly and his own head, the rest of his body being under the mare. However, I never touched him, I am happy to say, and two others did as I did ; but the third was not *quite* so fortunate. He jumped on his head, as he thought, but it was only his hat, as his head had just then slipped out of it. But you know, my dear fellow, these things will happen in our fast country. No joke, you are aware, for a fellow to fall at the first fence, with such a crowd close behind him, all trying to get first, in fact, all jealous as girls. However, I kept my line ; and if I remember right, the next fence was nothing—*only* a gate, a stiff one to be sure ; but young ones are always good at timber, that is to say, if they will but look at it ; but the pace was beginning to tell already, for the country was most infernally deep. There were not more than eight or ten *very* near the hounds, and no one exactly on my line, so I didn’t care a rush for a fall. I saw things were going well, and puggy was facing a rare country. In short, we could plainly see we were in for a tickler.

"I began to be sorry, however, that I was riding the young one—indeed I meant to have had him second horse, and I will say this, Wilson * advised me to it. However, I let him go ; and as I only gave three hundred for him at Newmarket, I thought I'd try what he was made of. You know, my good fellow, it's no use keeping horses to look at at Melton, and if they are good for nothing, send them to the hammer ! Let them try their luck in the rurals. You know they won't do for us.

"The next fence was a bullfinch—black as night itself. You could not have seen through it with a lantern. As to what was t'other side Heaven only knew. I could not guess ; but what was to be done ? The hounds were going the top of the pace, no time to turn a yard right or left ; two fellows rather nearer to them than I was (couldn't bear that you know) so *at it* we went. As for the young one, he absolutely appeared to like it, but I cannot say I did, though I should have thought little of it with most of my other horses, and you know I have near a score about as good as my neighbours. It was a rasper to be sure, and I can't say but I was glad when we were over it. The next man to me would not have it at all, but there were five more well with the hounds to my left—all the rest *no where*. To be sure the pace was nothing less than terrific. John White sang out—' sharper than common this morning my boy, how does the young one like it ? ' and you know he seldom cries out on that score. Indeed he reminds me of Jem Robinson the jockey. Jem swears a race horse never yet went fast enough for *him*, and declares if it would not hurt him, he should like to be shot out of a cannon's mouth ; and so it is with John White and a few others. The pace is scarcely ever good enough for them. However, there was no cause for complaint now. My horse kept going well, in short he delighted me. I would not have taken a thousand for him. He jumped an ox-fence—the next but one after the bullfinch—and then a stile with an awkward foot-bridge, and a brook, quite as well as old Bounce would have jumped them. I have got a trump, quoth I, to *myself*, for there was no one very near to have heard me. The blood of old Prunella will tell. But he kept shaking his head in a curious manner. I had never seen him do so before. If I had had my whip in my hand, I should have given him a nobber, for you know it's awkward, going very fast at high and strong timber—post and rail, or what not—with a blind ditch on your side (and you know the ditches in Leicestershire are like all other ditches in November,) with your horse shaking his head like a terrier shaking a rat. But I had lost my whip at that infernal bullfinch, and part of my breeches too. I know not how it happened, but that day I was not in leathers. I suppose Johnson thinks corderoys less trouble, and often says when he wakes me—' Likely to be wet, sir,

* His head groom.

better not wear leathers to-day.' The sly rogue ! the washerwoman polishes the corderoys, but *he* cleans the leathers, you know. However, to proceed with my story. When we checked for a minute or two under Carlton Clump, I found what it was that made the poor devil shake his head. He had got a great thorn in his eye, out of that infernal bullfinch, and the blood was running down the side of his head from a tear from another. I got the thorn out the best way I could, but he was evidently in great pain. What was to be done ? I could have cried. You know I love horses better than most things, and I abhor cruelty in any shape. I would not it should have happened for a thousand guineas or more. But it was done. I looked out for the second horses, not one was to be seen ; and how should they ? We had come as straight as a bird could have flown, for at least six miles. I condemned myself ; I wished myself any where but where I was, I said — ' What could have possessed me to have ridden Edwin first horse to-day, in such a country as this, when Footpad is so fit to go, and Wilson told me I'd better not.' ' I'll go home,' I said ; but confound it,—at that very moment Ravisher and Rantipole hit off the scent, and, my good fellow, what could I do ? What would you have done ? Edwin had recovered his wind, and as he shook his head less, and played cheerfully with his bit, I hoped he was better. He was carrying me *magnificently* ; not more than a dozen fellows with the hounds ; a splendid country before us—*I took the lead again* ; I shall never forget the third fence we now came to, which was out of the next field but one to Shankton Holt. It was not a *double*, but a *treble* (a *trouble* I was going to say). It was of this description, but thank heaven there are not many such. There was first a ditch, then a rail, then another ditch, and then another rail. You see there is no landing for a horse if he takes this at twice, except on the first rail, or in the second ditch ; but the old ones *will* double these fences when very well handled too.

" But the wind was in Edwin, and I knew he would face anything, but I doubted his being up to this queer double. I sent him at it, then, at the rate of forty miles an hour, thinking to clear it all ; but, far as the clever young horse could fling himself, he could not clear the whole. He alighted with one fore leg over, and the other under the outermost rail, and gave me a thundering fall. ' It's unfortunate,' said I to myself, glancing my eye at the fence, as I arose from the ground, ' if I had known that middle rail had been so weak, we should have gone in and out clever—at least with only a scramble. I'm out of luck to day,' added I, ' but here goes again,' and soon jumped into my saddle.

" The hounds turning to me a little, I was almost immediately in my place again. ' What now ?' said one. ' Disasters come thickly this morning,' cried another. ' All right again,' replied I ; ' take care of yourselves, for we are in for

business to-day, and I perceive one or two of you have been kissing your Mother Earth. Don't holloa till you're out of the wood, my boys !' The scent appeared better and better ; indeed, the pace had been awful since the check in the wind-mill-field. I looked back twice, and could only see four, and there were but five besides myself with the hounds. ' This is beautiful,' I said. ' *Divine !*' shouted L. I thought so too. I could not help giving them a cheer which I don't often do. Ten minutes more, however, began to tell tales. One of the best nags out of Melton began to look queer, at least I thought so ; but R. had rammed him along at a devil of a rate, and you know he rides with rather a slack rein. ' Never loose their heads, my boy, whatever you do,' said my uncle to me, soon after I was breeched ; and no doubt you have heard of him in old Meynell's days. He was one of the best of that time, though he might be reckoned slow now. Well, to proceed with our run. We crossed the brook under Norton-by-Galby, and went as straight as a line for Rolleston Wood. ' Ha ! ha ! *another* ox-fence,' said I to myself, as we rose the hill in Galby Field, which being deep and holding, took rather tightish hold of the nags. In return, however, I kept a tight hold upon mine, and was delighted to find him so well. ' I'll not have this ox-fence,' said I ; ' they are turning to the right, and I'll make for the sheep-pen in the corner.' But there was no such luck for me or my horse. The scent lay nearly right a-head of us, but the hounds, if any thing, were bearing to the left. ' Here goes, then, there is nothing else for it ;' so catching fast hold of his head I sent him at it manfully : but it had like to have been a case. The ditch was broad and deep, the hedge thick and plashed, and the rail beyond them strong. Neither was this all. There was a considerable fall into the next field, which would have been bad enough had my horse landed on the ridge, but unfortunately he landed in the furrow, and the furrow was deep and sticky. The drop must have been seven feet at the least, and he had a struggle to keep his legs, for he must have cleared more than seven yards in length, or he would not have got over it at all. *It told upon him* ; but I soon got him upon a headland, and standing up in my stirrups, took a pull at his head, which recovered him wonderfully before he got to the end of the ground, which was sixty acres or more. In short, he cleared a high gate into the Uppingham and Leicester road, a little to the right of Billesdon, and a large straggling black-thorn-hedge and ditch out of it with apparent ease to himself.

" ' *This cannot last long,*' I said, ' I wish the fox would die, or that Footpad would make his appearance.' The latter chance, however, was out. ' He'll go to ground in the Coplow,' I vainly said to myself, ' or at least we may come to a check.' The devil a bit ; he never went into the Coplow, but straight away as if for Lozeby Plantations. ' I shall kill the young one,' thought I ; but what, my good fellow,

could I do ? We went right over Tilton Field—the devil's own place for a tired one—and out of it I got a fall ; but I believe it was my own fault. The fence was of this description :—it was plashed, and newly plashed, with growers in it as thick as a man's thigh ; but (the devil take all Leicestershire hedgers !) the brushwood leaned, uncut, towards me, over at least two yards of ground, and there was a yawning ditch on the further side. Edwin was going gallantly at it, when, perhaps thinking I was upon Guineapig, or perhaps fearing we might drop short, I rammed both spurs into his sides, and he jumped further than he need have done. He kept his legs on landing, but the third step he took his toe struck the top of a mole hill, and down he went on his head. He rolled completely over me, and we lay on the ground together. He was up first, however, for I could neither stir hand nor foot ; but it was only from the wind being knocked out of me, and in a very few minutes I caught him. Indeed, he was walking *quietly* away, with his back turned to the hounds. (Between you and me, he began to think he had had enough of them.) I did not like his appearance. His tail was shaking—his flanks worked violently—there was that stare about his eyes which horses show when they are over-worked—and he staggered as I leaned my weight on the stirrup. I stood still for a moment but I could hear nothing. 'It's all over,' said I ; 'I must go home ;' and I patted Edwin on the neck, but dared not look at his eye. The very thought of it annoyed me excessively : 'But accidents,' said I, 'will happen.' I opened a gate on my left, and turned short on the headland, which led me on to a hard road. Here Edwin struck into a trot without being urged to it by me. 'Hark !' said I, 'I think I hear the hounds ;' but Edwin had heard them already. From a trot he struck into a gallop, and I viewed them about a mile before me. 'He'll not face this wind,' said I, 'I have a chance of dropping in with them yet, and, *perhaps*, I may alight upon Footpad, for that's a clever little boy on his back.' But I ought to have been on him myself, and then I should have been in my place. 'By Jove,' continued I, 'they are coming round to us—he is turning short for Quenby. I shall catch them at Newton village. What a tickling the nags must have had over the hills !'

"I fell in with them in a road beyond the village. There were now seven men with the hounds, and I made the eighth. 'Where have you been ?' said one. '*Where I deserve to be*,' was my reply. 'Are you hurt ?' 'No.' But Edwin ! what state was he in ? Why, my dear fellow I'll tell you. The hard road had recovered him, and he leaped a widish place out of the lane when the hounds crossed under his nose, as well as he would have leaped it in the morning. '*He's heart of oak*,' said I, and sent him at a flight of rails quite as high as his back, which he cleared with apparent ease. In short, he appeared the freshest horse in the field ; for he had

had his puff whilst the others were going over Newton Hills (but remember, he was only a five-year old.) Distress showed itself in all ; even Mountebank began to refuse, which he never does till he is beat, and T— swears he was never beat but twice. L— got fast in a sheep-pen ; for although old Dance-away jumped into it he would not jump out of it : in short, the jump was out of him, and we never saw him again. ‘Where’s the best place?’ cried Lord —, who could not face some timber, and was looking for a creep through a bullfinch : he could not find one, and we never saw him again, ‘How shall we get over the brook?’ holloaed N— who would have jumped one twice as wide in the morning without thinking about it. ‘*Go quick at it,*’ said I, and Edwin went a yard beyond it. ‘Well done the five-year old!’ holloaed W— and in an instant he was over his head in the water, for his horse never rose at it at all.

“There were only four of us now with the hounds, and it began to be labour and sorrow. As for Edwin, I found it was all over with him. The flash in the pan had exploded, or I should rather say it was extinguished at the brook. Still, however, I am ashamed to say, I persevered with him, but I could scarcely lift him along ;—he dragged his legs through his fences, and I could not make him rise. He was down on his head twice, though we did not part company. In addition to this, with the finest mouth in the world, he leaned half his weight on my hand, and the hounds were leaving us apace. ‘I’ll try him once more,’ said I ; so got him on a smooth head-land (for the ridge and furrow were destroying him) and sent him at a stile at the end of it. For the first time in his life he refused ; I put him at it again, and I thought he was going to take it ; but he had not the power to rise, and, swerving a little to the right, he ran his head into the hedge and floundered on his knees on the bank. I jumped off him immediately, and thanked him for not giving me a fall. I could still see the hounds, and three men going by their side. But I could *only see* them, I could no longer be with them ; like Richard at Bosworth, what would not I have given for a horse !

“The sequel, however, is to come. The fox was killed about three miles beyond, after one of the finest chases recorded even in Leicestershire. But in what a situation were myself and poor Edwin ? As for myself, I was bruised and sore, and had dislocated one of my fingers ; I had also lost my whip ; but these were only trifles. I could not bear to look upon Edwin. I got on the off-side of him to lead him, because it was the near eye that was injured. I looked for a village, but I could see none ; but I saw the house of a Leicestershire grazier, and that was enough for me. I led Edwin to his stable, and his hack conveyed me to Melton.

“ ‘Wilson,’ said I to my groom, and no man has a better, ‘send a boy back

with this hack directly, and put yourself into a gig without loss of time, with everything necessary for a tired and maimed horse, and leave him not till he is recovered—that is to say, if’—(mind ye, my good fellow, I had my fears). ‘Contrary to your recommendation, Wilson, I rode the young one the first run this morning ; and, unfortunately for me, it has been the best we have had these three years.’ ‘Tis a pity you rode Edwin, sir, when Footpad wants work,’ said Wilson in a low but respectful tone, such as grooms are wont to use. ‘I think he’ll make the best horse in your stable in another year or two. But where shall I find him, sir?’ continued he. ‘At that excellent fellow’s house, Mr. T.’s, near Hungerton. He has turned his own horse out of his best loose box on purpose to make Edwin comfortable.’ ‘*But where is he cut, sir?*’ asked the unsuspecting groom. ‘Is it an overreach, or have you staked him?’ ‘I’ve done neither,’ I said ; ‘*you will see ; get to him as quickly as you can.*’

“Do you know, my good fellow, we dined at B.’s, a capital party, and went to Lord C.’s afterwards, where all sort of fun was going on ; but hang me if I could eat my dinner or enjoy any thing after it for thinking of my poor young horse. But it is time to finish this story, for upon my word I don’t like to think of it. The next morning was Sunday, and I told Johnson not to call me till ten. However, being fidgetty, I rang my bell at nine, and asked if there were any tidings about my horse. ‘Yes, sir,’ said Johnson ; ‘Wilson came home last night.’ ‘How is that?’ said I. ‘*Edwin was dead, sir, before he got to the house.*’ ‘Shut the door,’ said I, hastily, ‘and don’t come near me till twelve.’ I have a good mind to say I’ll never go a-hunting again.”



CHAPTER III



THINK it is Addison who compares memory to those curious repositories in animals that are filled with stores of food, on which they may ruminate at their pleasure when taken from the pastures in which they have collected it, and there is something in the simile not altogether inapplicable to myself. Driven from those scenes from which I might reap stores of subject matter for the future, I am compelled to draw upon my reminiscences of the past ; but I rejoice to say that there will soon be an end to this, and I shall return to my labours like a giant refreshed. Allow me, however, one other comparison. The powers of the mind resemble those of the body ; the more we exercise them the more vigorous do

they become, and seldom fail us when we call upon them on a pinch. "But," said John Lockley, "never try to remember untoward events ; *let them pass* ;" or, as Horace advises, give them to the winds and waves. That this was the plan the former pursued I have little doubt, and that it mainly contributed to his green old age. And what is more probable than that such should be the case ? for, if to the fairy visions of hope we add nothing but pleasing recollections of the past, the stream of life must glide smoothly along, with little injury to the channel through which it passes. Let us then sing with Moore,

"When time, who steals our years away,
Shall steal our pleasures too ;
The mem'ry of the past shall stay,
And half our joys renew.
Then fill the bowl—away with gloom !
Our joys shall always last :
For hope shall brighten days to come,
And mem'ry gild the past."

My reminiscences present such a long catalogue of names which I wish to introduce to my readers, as eminent masters of, and riders to hounds, that I feel myself under the necessity of arranging them alphabetically, and so proceeding from alpha to omega, with their respective merits, impartially detailed. But observe this—although the precious gem receives its lustre from the foil, I shall draw no obnoxious comparisons ; but confine my remarks to those alone whose merits stand upon their own fame.

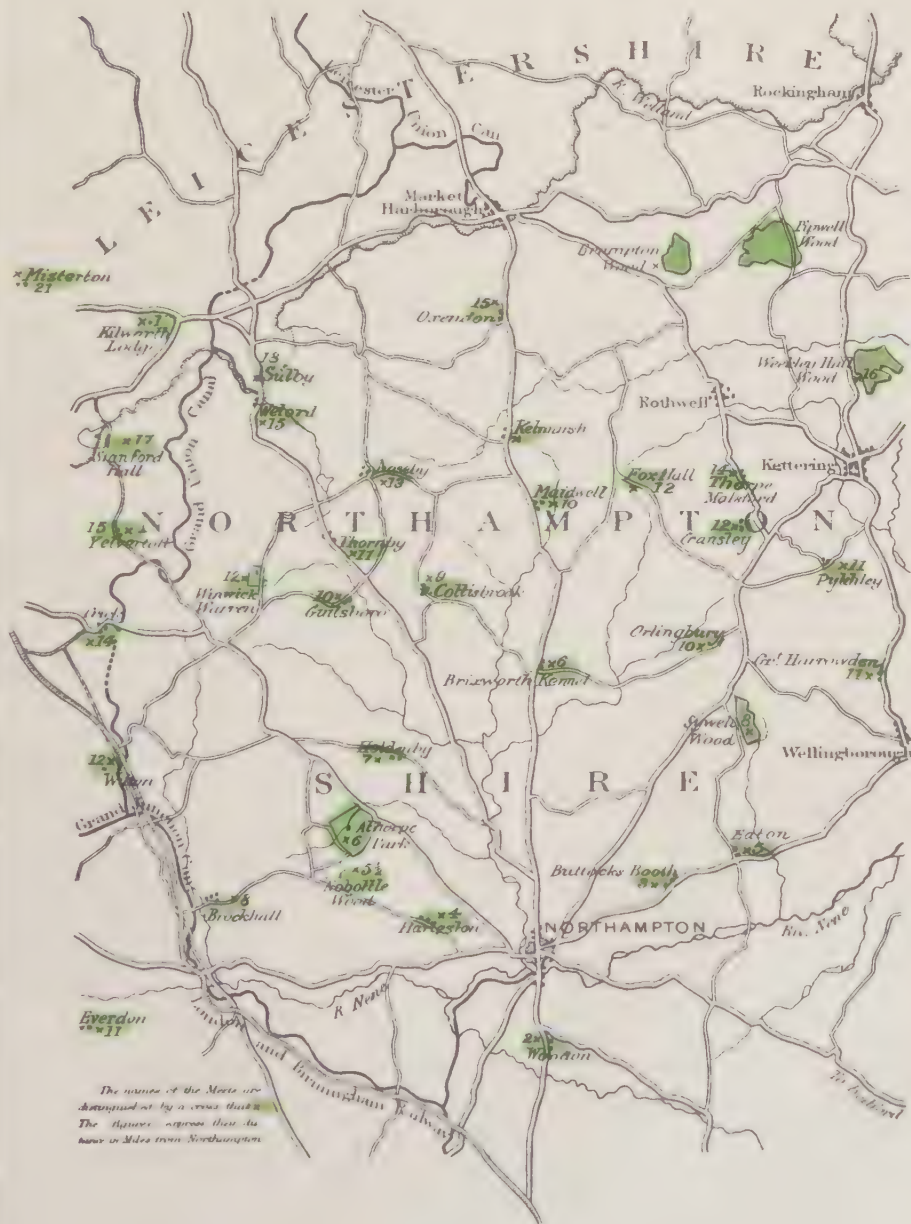
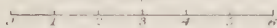
How can I do better than commence with Lord Althorp ? * To speak of him as a rider to hounds, however, I must go a long way back—just thirty years—and I am free to admit, that the retrospective glance strongly reminds me of the last peep Adam took at Paradise. The following appears in my hunting book ; perhaps his lordship may forget it, but I never shall, for it cost me a horse for which I had just given a hundred and thirty guineas, and the only consolation that accompanied the melancholy event was, "*I saw the finish.*" "Friday, December 30, 1803, met Mr. Warde, at Winnick Warren, Northamptonshire. Ran to ground, bolted him, and (*scripsisse pudet !*) killed him. Found again five minutes before twelve o'clock, near the same place, and killed him when attempting to reach the earths at Thorncomb, in Leicestershire, after a run of one hour and three quarters, with only two trifling checks ; and which run was declared by Mr. Warde and Lord Spencer, to be the quickest, *for the time*, ever seen in Northamptonshire. A large field was out ; and amongst *the few* who saw him killed, were Lords Spencer and *Althorpe*, Mr. Elwes, and Mr. Buller." Lord Althorpe was always considered a *very hard* rider, but having unfortunately had his shoulder put out of joint by a fall, and it being subject to be displaced again by exertion, he was obliged to give up hunting, of which I believe few men were much more fond.

Lord Alvanley, considering his great weight—say sixteen stone—has had but few equals. In nerve, no superior. He was not to be beat so long as his horses could live under him. The last time I saw his stud, it consisted of sixteen hunters—about his usual complement—and I would not wish to see a better, for his pace and country. I dare say many of my readers remember his lordship's lark in Lord Lichfield's country, when he took £5 each from eight hard-riding men, to return £10 to all who caught him, giving him a small start. Lord Lichfield and Mr. Biddulph had that honour, but no one else, although the distance was upwards of three miles, and over a stiff country, near Dunchurch. I perceive somewhat of a similar bet was proposed by a Mr. Storey, a few seasons ago in Oxfordshire ; the ground fixed upon being March-Gibbon Field, the severest, I think, ever ridden over, at certain times of the year, and if a horse goes best pace over it, and leaps

* Now Earl Spencer.

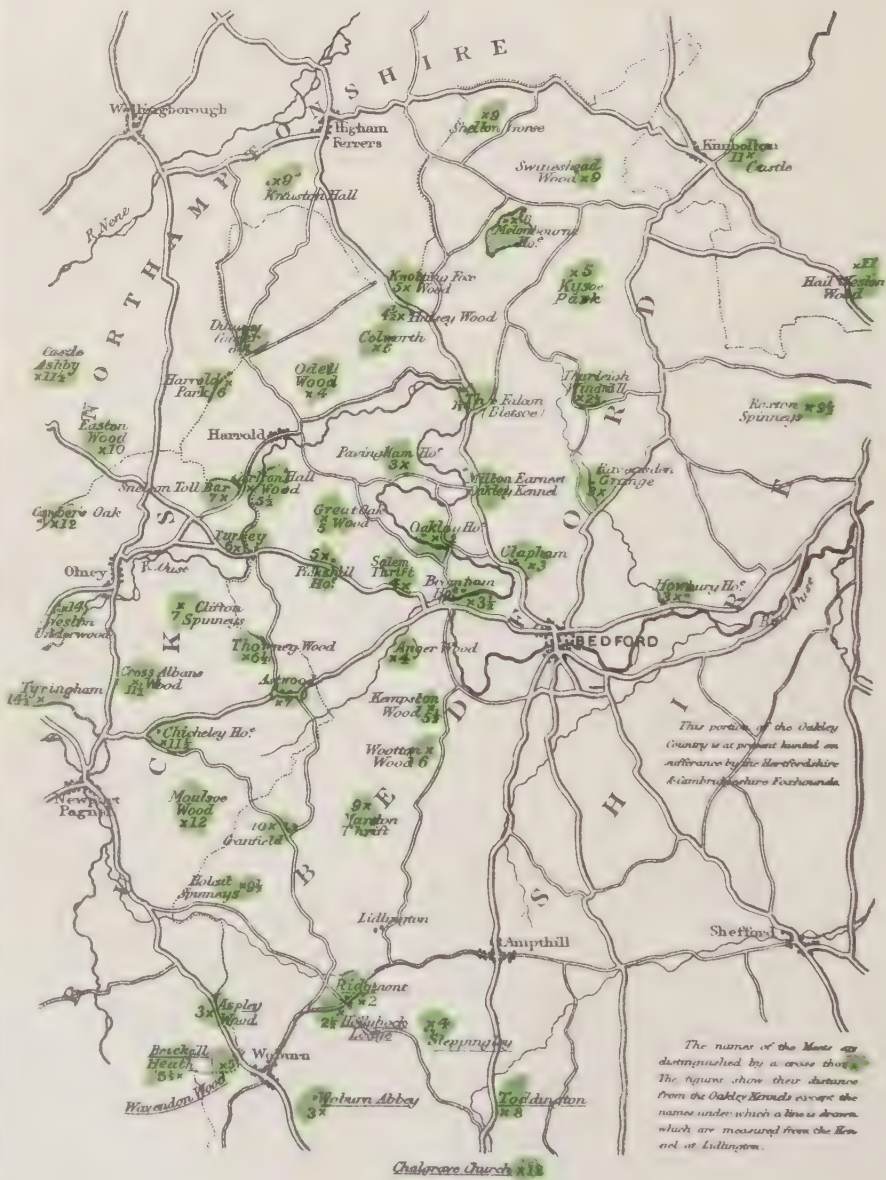
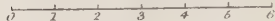
MAP OF THE MEETS OF THE PYTCHLEY HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



MAP OF THE
MEETS
OF THE
OAKLEY
HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles



the brook, on the far side, in his stroke, he is qualified for any country, and for any man whose weight he is equal to.

The Honourable George Anson was a fine horseman, and has frequently distinguished himself in fast things over Leicestershire. Indeed few men have gone better. But all of his name that I have ever seen, or heard of, can ride. How well I remember that gallant fellow, Sambrook Anson, in the late Lord Vernon's time ! he was not exactly in the form to ride—not a George Anson—but, by Jove, he was hard to beat so long as the wind was in his nag. I remember seeing him leap an awful gate into a hard road, with his horse all but in convulsions, and himself dead blown as well. But he would be with 'em, if possible, and he was one of the jolliest fellows in the field that ever was seen.

Do you remember Phœdrus's fable of the old woman putting her nose into an empty wine cask ? “Ye Gods !” said she, in raptures, “what precious liquor must this vessel have contained, when even its lees impart so fine a savour !” Now I am sorry to say I shall have to speak of two or three celebrated riders whom I never caught a sight of until far advanced in the wane of life, and amongst these was the late Lord Amesbury—better known as Mr. Dundas, of Barton, M.P. for Berkshire. He struck me, even when past the age allotted to man, to be a particularly strong and good horseman ; and a proof of nerve, uncommon at that time of life, was, that I saw him, in 1824, riding horses by no means of the stamp to carry old age to hounds. One of them, I recollect, was called Wisdom, known as such in the Racing Calendar, and certainly of some experience as a hunter ; but I saw him another day on a raw, unlicked thorough-bred one, appearing to have almost every thing to learn. It is, however—to me at least—delightful to see such gamesomeness in old age ; and I am often out of patience with stupid human nature, that sets an imaginary value upon life just in proportion as its real value is gone by. As for Lord Amesbury, he appeared to think no more of a broken neck than the youngest and bravest of the last season's Meltonians did, when he got well away from Glen Gorse. If spirits preserve any of the frailties of the flesh, can this worthy man find a heaven without hunting ? Certainly not ; he must be born again.

The late Mr. Astley, of Odstone, also one of Lord Vernon's men—the breeder of Magic and other race horses, and famous for his long horned cows and new Leicester sheep—was one of the best of the old ones, and could ride well to hounds after he had passed the grand climacteric. I cannot draw on my memory for the exact amount of his weight, but I should book him in his teens, in the scales. I remember seeing him get a very awkward fall at a fence, and shall never forget the coolness with which he answered the usual question—*are you hurt ?* “Not

much," said he, "*only* my collar bone is broke." I saw a good deal of "old Astley," as he was called, in the field, and thought him one of those quiet sportsmen who throw a lustre over the chase, and as such I cherish the recollection of him. But whatever he did, he did *con amore* ; as witness his annual visit to Ballinasloe fair, Ireland.

It appears as though the first letter of the alphabet were unfriendly to first-flight men in the field, but I close the list with two huntsmen whose merits, as riders, are beyond doubt. Christopher Atkinson, once of the Surrey Union hounds, is one ; and Richard Adamson, huntsman to the Vine pack, the other. Each of these men was educated in a good school. Atkinson whipped in to Sir Bellingham Graham, and distinguished himself on many occasions as a horseman, but particularly in making into a hunter, as the phrase is, one of the most restive young horses that ever went into a field ; and furthermore be it said, into as complete a hunter as a sportsman would ever wish to throw a leg over. I allude to a horse called Doctor, at that time in the Baronet's stud, and afterwards the property of Mr. Wroughton of Wroughton, in the Craven country, where I saw that gentleman ride him with Mr. Warde's hounds. His (Atkinson's) riding was likewise much admired in Surrey, where I have reason to believe he was but indifferently mounted.

Before I speak of Adamson, I must say a word of his father, and I would ask one or two of those crack men of his day who remember him, if they ever saw a much cleverer fellow, on a middling nag, than old Dick Adamson, who hunted Sir John Dashwood King's harriers for many *many* years.

But you will ask me—was not Dick well mounted in the stable of so tasty a man in horseflesh as Sir John Dashwood King ? Not he indeed, for Dick would choose his own horses. Amongst others, he fancied an ugly lop-eared brute, out of a gentleman's carriage, calling him *Clodhopper*, which he rode for several years, and it was astonishing the good figure he cut upon him, with his very fast hounds. As to the five feet walls on the Gloucestershire hills, he hopped over them as he would over a sheep hurdle ; and when he threw off in that deep vale, between Moreton-in-the-Marsh and Stow, he cared nothing for the Evenload Brook, not to be sneezed at, I assure you. In short, not one hunter in twenty could be backed at it, barring either a fall or a scramble. But to return to his son, of whom I saw a good deal during my residence in Hampshire. I call him a very pretty horseman indeed—never appearing to hurry and upset his horse, although always in a good place ; and I have reason to believe that, during the time I was in his country, he lamed fewer horses than any hard riding man that ever came under my observation—no bad criterion of a good hand and seat. His start in life was as second-horseman to

Lord Scarborough, which post he filled for five seasons, and he afterwards lived as whipper-in to Mr. Musters.

The letter B produces a bountiful collection of hard riders, which I shall take as they present themselves. What think you of Mr. Bunce, for a start? Who is more deserving of the box place on our coach than "Jack Bunce," as he is called by those who know him, and now and then by those who know him not. But this is par excellence, and not after Jack Bunce the pirate, for an honester man does not live, nor a truer sample of a real, unsophisticated, *unforeignized* Englishman. I may also add that there does not live a truer lover of hunting, nor many better judges of it, barring a few of the profession. But it is a sure sign of the *furor venaticus* being pretty strong on any man, who, weighing fifteen stone, follows hounds for thirty years. No further proof is required. Mr. Bunce has had some good horses in his time, and one or two which have been transported into better countries than those he has generally hunted in, and at good prices. But was Jack never in the swell countries himself? I believe but seldom, his stable not being sufficiently strong for so strong a man, but he was *once* at Melton, and on the score of old acquaintance I am sure he will pardon my showing him up. Not knowing his road to cover the first day, he kept his eye on two horses waiting at the door of the old club, which were presently mounted by Messrs. Vanneck and Lindow. The turnpike road was soon abandoned, and their horses' heads (both good hunters) put straight for the place of meeting. Now what was to be done? Our hero had but one alternative—either to "follow the leader," or give up his day's sport; so being tolerably mounted, on what is called in the provincials a *useful horse*—his crack hunter being gone forward—he made the attempt. The pace was good and the fences large, notwithstanding which Bunce was in their wake; but at last there was death to all his hopes. The Burton Brook was taken in stroke by the well-mounted Meltonians, but in the middle of this our hero was landed (is not this a "Bull" by the way?) and thus ended his Leicestershire debut.

The mention of this name reminds me of an anecdote that purchasers of hunters will do well to remember. Heavy weights must not be particular as to the neat appearance of horses; and Mr. Bunce having been informed that there was what is termed "a good sort of a plain strong horse" to be sold, near Northampton, went thither to look at him. On his arrival in the town he called on a well known good judge, the late Mr. Benton, to ask his opinion of the steed. "I have seen him," says he, "but he won't do." "Why not?" demanded Mr. Bunce. "I saw *his head* through the window," replied Mr. Benton, "and I said—'tis *impossible you can make a hunter*." Now here is one other proof of *Fronti nulla fides*, for he made an excellent hunter,—was ridden by Mr. Bunce three years,—and then sold

for as many hundred guineas. The late Mr. Dansey used to say, "We don't ride on the head," and his experience, as a very heavy weight, led him to the conclusion that large heads, well put on, are a recommendation to horses carrying weight.

In Mr. Lowth's notes to his famous Billesdon Coplow Poem, he says, "None but good fellows are ever esteemed worthy of a nick name." Before quitting the provincials then, I will ask the question—what sportsman has not seen, or at any rate heard of, the renowned Dicky Bayzand? He has been some years in his grave; but if he had kept away from Newmarket, where he was a flat among sharps, and contented himself with the handsome competence he was heir to, he would have been still going above ground to the amusement of his friends, and to the credit of fox-hunting, for he was a right good sportsman and a dear lover of that sport. He was likewise, at a certain pace, an excellent huntsman, but too slow to see a quick thing—*hounds running straight*. This proceeded from several combined causes. To be sure he was heavy—not less than fifteen stone with his saddle—despite of all his care to reduce himself,—but this should not have stopped him, mounted as he generally was, or as he might always have been, with his judgment in horse-flesh, which was good. Secondly, he always appeared afraid of allowing his horses to go fast over rough ground, or across grips. Thirdly, he was shy of strong fences, and took too much time over weak ones; and lastly, as his horses were always on sale, and were generally laid in at high prices, he was fearful of "letting them go too fast under his weight, lest they should let the cat out of the bag at the same time;" for although he was an excellent judge, he often like others got hold of the wrong sort. It is a curious fact, however, though by no means a solitary one, that the horse he went best upon was his old black horse, for he had no name, which he rode for many years, and which must have been a very difficult one to ride. However, I will describe him, and your readers shall judge for themselves. He was upwards of sixteen hands high, with an immense head and an iron mouth; a hard puller, and a rusher at his fences. But he was well bred and stout, and, possessing the power of a dray horse, seldom felt *distress*; and perhaps it was this that inspired his rider with confidence. He was, it is true, an accomplished fencer, but no man could have ridden him unless a very superior horseman, which Bayzand certainly was allowed to be. Slow, however, as my old friend *was*, compared with what he *ought to have been, with his stable and his good eye to hounds*—for few men had better—he could give an excellent account of a run, and describe all its interesting points with great minuteness. In short, he was a sportsman, and looked up to as such in all countries in which he hunted.

Were I to ransack my memory for all the amusing circumstances relating to

this extraordinary character, as I may denominate him, I should far exceed the limits of my pages, so one or two must suffice. He was one day going better than common, on a fine grey horse that he had purchased of me at a long price—no doubt with a view of selling him to some one at a much longer, for he was not quite equal to his weight—when he got an awful fall over a high post and rail fence. Dicky was as dead as he is at present for a short time, and his friends imagined it was all over with him ; but coming to himself, as the saying is, he appeared in his true character, for the first words he uttered (and most emphatically did he utter them) were —“ *No fault of the horse, by G—d.*” Neither was it ; for he had alighted with one leg up to the shoulder in a vacant post-hole—an occurrence that we may wonder does not oftener put the neck of the fox-hunter to hazard. Next to a rabbit-hole fall at best pace over a gentleman’s park ; or what we call coming *rump first* over four strong rails, it is the most dangerous fall one can have.

As it is possible these lines may be read when the hand that writes them shall be dust ; and as we have been told, there are “ sermons in stones, and good in every thing,” perhaps I may indulge the notion that some good may arise to those who have yet to enter upon the grand theatre of the world, if I produce from the ashes of this celebrated sportsman a beacon that shall warn them against approaching the rock on which was shipwrecked his happiness and, I may safely add, his life. His fate was this :—He had enough, he grasped at more, and he lost all ! Perhaps in many of my readers’ eyes, few people were much more desirably settled in life than Mr. Bayzand. He had a comfortable house, with a very profitable farm ; a good income, a good stable of horses, good health, and good friends. He had also good credit. If he wanted £500, he had it for the asking. What more could he want ? Why, we might answer, *nothing*. But it is with individuals as with states :—

“ At postquam Fortuna loci caput extulit hujus,
Et tetigit summos vertice Roma deos,
Creverunt et opes, et opum furiosa Cupido :
Et cum possideant plurima plura volant.”

Thus wrote Ovid, and such was the case with poor Bayzand. In an evil hour, and by the cover side, without preparing himself for the completion of it, he made an offer to the late Mr. Fermor, of Tusmore Park, of £73,000 for his Worcestershire property, imagining that he could realize a large sum by the purchase, and it ruined him ! So truly sporting, however, was the bargain, that the odd £3000 depended on the event of a filly winning or losing the Oaks !

Some of the horse dealing transactions, however, of our departed brother sportsman, cannot but create a smile. Perhaps it was his constant attendance at the

Newmarket meetings that gave him an insight into the doctrine of chances, but his favourite system of selling his horses was upon post obit bonds. I think I speak within compass when I say they did not realize him five shillings in the pound, but if he were to rise again, I am quite sure he would try them again, so deeply was he infatuated by the premium they held out. The following is one of many amusing anecdotes I could relate on the subject :—He sold a horse in London, to a brother sportsman, for a certain consideration—a pretty good one, no doubt—payable on the decease of the purchaser's uncle. The bond being prepared, sealed, signed, and attested, was safely deposited in the breeches-pocket of the seller, when, as he was in the act of buttoning the said pocket, he gravely exclaimed—"But I say, my good fellow, *are you quite sure you have an uncle?*" Now whether the gentleman, now also "gone to his fathers," was sure he had an uncle, is what I cannot pretend to decide, but I am quite sure the seller told me he was not paid for his horse ; and I am also sure I could mention a dozen other similar cases. Nevertheless, I consider Bayzand to have been a considerable gainer by his speculation by horses, on the balance. At one time, indeed, by a sort of Midas gift, every thing he touched turned to gold.

There was a kind of double phenomenon, some twenty years back, in the Atherstone country, in the person of a man and the capabilities of his mare, that made a great noise in those days. This was no less than a tanner, in the town of Nuneaton, Warwickshire, who, on an animal little better than a pony, was a match for most men, if not for any man, who ever took the field. In fact, by way of proving this, he made a dead set at Assheton Smith, whenever he went out with the Quorn hounds, and he could very rarely shake him off. This becoming somewhat of a jocular reproach amongst his friends, that gallant rider was determined to get rid of the tanner ; so, mounted one day on his big grey horse, he sent him at a flight of stiff rails, as high even as his back, saying—after the manner of Dick Knight, upon Contract—"Now then, I'll stop this d—d fellow." Luckily for the tanner, Smith broke the top rail, and he followed him. His name was Burton ; and as every man who excels likes to become *distingué*, he always appeared in a light-coloured green coat, which, in allusion to his almost flying over a country, obtained for him the nick name of The Paroquet. He was a gallant little fellow, however, and his only fault was rather too much of the "quickenings power," ambition, that "last infirmity of *noble* minds,"—ergo very excusable in a tanner.

In the same country, the Atherstone, there was, as supposed to be, another prodigy—namely, the best man in England on a raw horse. This is saying a great deal to those who have seen Dick Christian, Joe Wright, or Dick Bradley's Harry : but, from what I saw of him—and that was a good deal—I think him

entitled to the character of the best *gentleman* in England on a raw horse. I need not inform one half of my readers of whom I am speaking, but the other half must be told it is Mr. Charles Boulton, brother to another gentleman of that name—Mr. John Boulton, of Baxterly, near Atherstone—a clipping rider, of a great weight, and a good sportsman in Lord Vernon's and Mr. Adderley's days, and whom I also saw going well when Sir Bellingham Graham had their country.

A considerable portion of Warwickshire contributes to what is now called the Atherstone country.

The late Lord Vernon hunted it about twelve years, it being then called the Gobshall country, as during the time his Lordship's hounds were in it—which was for periods of six weeks at a time during the season—he and his family took up their quarters at Gobshall-house, now the seat of Earl Howe, and then of Baroness Howe, his Lordship's mother. Lord Vernon also hunted, at the same time, the Sudbury country, so called from the name of his seat near Ashbourne, Derbyshire, which country is now occupied by Mr. Meynell Ingram. Here of course his Lordship had a kennel.

The late Lord Vernon was a sportsman ; but his relation, the Rev. George Talbot, was what is now termed a professor, and took an active part in the kennel and the field, a task for which he was qualified. Sam. Lawley, his Lordship's huntsman, was likewise a trump card in his line, and so great a favourite was he with his noble master, that he mounted him on horses for which he refused three hundred guineas a-piece, determined that every advantage should be given him in the field—an example well worthy of imitation. His first whipper-in was Harry Jackson, afterwards Lord Middleton's huntsman ; an honest and good servant, but too slack in his nature for the active and enterprising duties of a huntsman. Indeed Lord Middleton was so much aware of this, that he has been heard to tell him in the field, at a certain hour of the day, that he was thinking more of his mutton-chops, than of the cover in which he should find his second fox.

Lord Vernon's hounds were in very high repute, and, taken altogether, the hunt was looked upon as one of the most respectable at that time in England. There was something particularly pleasing in the manners and general deportment of the worthy Baron, who bore every outward and visible sign of the rank he was born to sustain. In short he did the thing in a really nobleman-like style, and stood as high as any man in the class of masters of fox-hounds. The uniform of his hunt was a deep orange colour, which looked very gay in the field, being of a brighter hue than scarlet, although nearly approaching to it. There were many good riders in his hunt—for instance, the Honourable Sambrooke

Anson, who will long be remembered as a sportsman in the field, and an excellent companion in the evening—also some welter weights, amongst whom Mr. Theophilus Leve, Mr. John Boulton, Mr. Vaughton, and Mr. Edmund Peel shone conspicuously.

In Lord Vernon's day, this country was not nearly so extensive as it afterwards became, when it got into other hands. No portion of the Meriden woodlands, nor of the still more noble ones on the Dunchurch side, belonged to it, neither did it extend far into Leicestershire. In that county on the Hinckley side, the covers of Bosworth and Burbage Wood were the two principal fixtures, nor did it go further in that direction. It is true, however, there were several other favourite fixtures in the far-famed county of Leicester; namely, Wedington Wood, on the great road between Atherstone and Hinckley; Sutton Ambion, near Bosworth; Nailson Wicks, near Bardon Hill, on the forest side; Orton Gorse, near Thorpe, on the Ashby de la Zouch side; the covers at Gobshall; Lord Maynard's Gorse, at Desford; &c. &c.

So much for what was called the best part of the open country. The woodlands of the Atherstone country were always splendid in the eye of a thorough sportsman. Beginning at Bentley Park, close to the town of Atherstone, we proceed to Oldbury—the seat of Mr. Okeover of coaching celebrity—Harborough Hall Woods, commonly called Astley Woods, the property of Mr. Newdigate; Ansley Woods, Mr. Chetwode's; Arley Woods, Mr. Vaughton's; Dunton: Kingsbury Wood, the property of Mr. Willoughby; Baxterley, of Mr. John Boulton; Birch Coppice between Atherstone and Fazeley, belonging to Sir John Chetwynd; Middleton Woods, Lord Middleton's; Sutton Park, belonging to the corporation of Sutton; Hints, Mr. Floyer's; Hoppas Hayes, on the road from Tamworth to Lichfield, formerly the property of the late Lord Spencer Chichester (whose father, the late Marquis of Donegal, once hunted this country, before Lord Vernon's time), but since belonging to the Rev. Thomas Levett; Swinfen Woods, the property of Mr. Swinfen, so well known in the sporting world; Freeford Wood, belonging to General Dyott, who succeeded his brother, Richard Dyott, whose memory will never die, so long as Staffordshire is Staffordshire, as the great promoter of agriculture and a true friend to fox-hunting; the numerous covers at Drakelow, the property of Sir Roger Gresley; the great Seal Woods, between Burton and Tamworth—capital scenting covers; those at Thorpe, Mr. Inge's; and Amington Decoy, near Tamworth, on the property of Mr. Repington.

Looking at this country as it was in Lord Vernon's time, we may place it among the leading ones; for although it contains some fixtures, such as Hoppas Hayes,

the Black Swan (among the coal pits), Bentley Park, and others, not exactly suited to the taste of modern sportsmen ; and although some part of it, on the Lichfield and Coleshill sides, is not very favourable to scent, there are nevertheless advantages which counterbalance these objections. It is an easy country to cross, and the Leicestershire side of it is decidedly good. Burbage Wood, for example, is equal to most fixtures in Leicestershire—foxes generally breaking away to Bosworth, Enderby, Tooley, and very often to the Forest. In short, were I to fix the line a fox should take to show me a run, it should be from Burbage Wood to Enderby, in preference to any other line with which I am acquainted, unless it be one or two in the cream of the Quorn country. From Orton Gorse, Gobshall, and Sutton Ambion, very fine runs likewise often took place ; and from Bosworth to Linley Gorse, about six miles, was always, what is called a beautiful burst, on a good scenting day. In short, all the Ashby de la Zouch side is good, though it would be better if the Charnwood Forest were a few miles farther from it.

A few years before his death, Lord Vernon relinquished the field, and his country was taken possession of by the Rev. George Talbot, of Bruerton, near Lichfield, with a subscription of one thousand two hundred pounds per annum. He hunted it several seasons, showing excellent sport, and giving universal satisfaction, when the hand of death very suddenly arresting his progress, it became vacant, and was divided. Mr. Meynell purchased the hounds, and took the Sudbury or Derbyshire side, which he hunts to this day ; and the remainder, or Gobshall side, was occupied by Mr. Adderley, of Ham's Hall, between Coleshill and Lichfield—a very worthy country gentleman, but of more retiring habits than are suited to the situation of a master of fox-hounds, and he did not keep it more than three years. He was succeeded in it by Mr. Otway, of Sanford Hall, near Lutterworth, father of the present Mr. Otway Cave, late M.P. for Leicester, also of sporting celebrity : and Mr. Otway was followed by Sir Richard Puleston, who hunted it occasionally with his other country, for two seasons more, and then it became vacant. In 1812, however, the late Colonel Cooke, well known as a good practical sportsman, and an excellent kennel huntsman, and the author of "Observations on Fox-hunting, and the management of Hounds in the Kennel, and the Field," hunted it twice a-week for two seasons, on a limited subscription of eight hundred pounds per annum.

In 1814, Mr. Osbaldeston having vacated Nottinghamshire (which had been given up by Lord Middleton, previously to his hunting Warwickshire the second time), brought his hounds to Atherstone, and when in possession of the country (now, for the first time, called the Atherstone country), a great alteration took place in it. He established a club, on a very liberal plan, the members dining together

twice in the season, and out of its funds the kennel and stables at Witherley, within one mile of the town, were erected, and which the hounds and horses of those who have hunted the country, have since occupied. In consequence, however, of the Atherstone country not having been well and regularly hunted for some previous years, it would not stand more than three days in the week, and Mr. Osbaldeston having, with his usual zeal, determined on hunting five, he re-united the two countries (the Sudbury and Gobshall), which had been previously separated to suit the means and inclinations of its predecessors, and thus accomplished his fifth day. For this purpose Mr. Osbaldeston resided four weeks out of six at Atherstone, and the remaining two at the Flitch of Bacon, at Witchnor Bridge, between Burton-on-Trent and Lichfield; and although, as we before observed, he had just relinquished the Nottingham country, and was in possession of a large kennel of hounds—including the late Lord Monson's, for which he gave a thousand guineas, when in the Burton country—he purchased those of Messrs. Hall and Arkwright, who had for a short period hunted the Sudbury country, for five hundred pounds. After the first year, however, in consequence of the good preservation of the foxes, which was certain to be the result of his taking possession of it, Mr. Osbaldeston confined himself to the Atherstone country, and hunted it five days a-week, showing very excellent sport. In 1817, he relinquished it to take the Quorn country, and was succeeded by Sir Bellingham Graham.

The presence of the late Mrs. Osbaldeston, mother to the worthy master of the hounds, added no inconsiderable lustre to the period of her son's hunting the Atherstone country. The splendid style in which she lived, her almost unbounded hospitality, the numerous private and agreeable entertainments she made for the resident gentry of the neighbourhood, and the encouragement she gave to the public balls, contributed to enliven the country to a degree previously unknown and unthought of, but which wonderfully increased the popularity of the hunt, and secured the preservation of the foxes. A woman's influence always prevails, when directed towards a desirable object; and many of the new gorse covers which sprang up in the country about this time, owed their existence to this lady's kindheartedness. May her example not be lost on posterity; for in other affairs besides fox-hunting, the absence of this kind feeling towards individuals, not intimately connected with ourselves, has produced great evils to society, by destroying links which ought never to have been lost.

During Sir Bellingham Graham's time, another very material alteration for the better took place in the Atherstone country. In consequence of a trifling misunderstanding between Mr. Loraine Smith and Mr. Osbaldeston, the covers of Whetstone Gorse, between Lutterworth and Leicester, and those at Enderby

(the seat of Mr. Smith), which had always been drawn by the Quorn hounds, were added to the Atherstone country, to which they have ever since belonged. Sir Bellingham also, from the strength of his establishment, was enabled to hunt five, and often six days a-week, and gave very general satisfaction to the gentlemen of the country, and a numerous list of visitors, having afforded a brilliant succession of sport from the year 1817 to 1820, when he succeeded Lord Althorpe and Sir Charles Knightley, in Northamptonshire.

Sir Bellingham Graham was at and before this time, his own huntsman in the field. His first residence was close to the town of Atherstone, and of course close to the kennel ; but as he afterwards occupied Clift-house, near Fazeley, the property of Robert Willoughby, Esq.—a staunch, good fox-hunter—he had a temporary kennel at that place. Finding an inconvenience, however, in being so far from his hounds, he removed to Linley Hall, the seat of Mr. Bracebridge, within a mile of Atherstone, where he remained until he relinquished the country.

Of all the celebrated men who ever hunted the Quorn country, none did the whole thing better than Sir Bellingham Graham did it, and in proof of its being expected that he would do it well, he had the largest subscription to his hounds of any one that ever received assistance towards expenses, from the hands of their brother sportsmen. If my memory serves me, it was a little over four thousand pounds. It is to be lamented, however, that instead of having thrown away his time, in hunting other inferior countries, Sir Bellingham was for so short a period in Leicestershire, for he only hunted it during the seasons of 1821 and 1822.

But let us look further back to Sir Bellingham Graham as a master. His first appearance was in the year 1815, when he succeeded Mr. Musters in the Badsworth country, which he hunted two seasons. He then succeeded Mr. Osbaldeston in the Atherstone country, and that was the first in which I hunted with him. In 1820 he took possession of the Pytchley country, on Sir Charles Knightley giving it up, and thence he went to Quorn. From Quorn he took what was then called the Shiffnal, now the Albrighton country, and finished his career as a master in Shropshire—in each of which three last-named countries I had the pleasure to hunt with him. And it *was* a pleasure to any real sportsman to hunt with Sir Bellingham Graham, because he did the thing throughout in a thorough sportsman-like style, as fox-hunting ought to be done. From the moment he got upon his hunter, until he killed or lost his fox, he was intent and earnest in his pursuit, and without unnecessary harshness, but the result of his sportsman-like conduct was, that no man kept his field in such order. Indeed I have heard this compliment paid to him by many of his Melton friends, who gave it as their opinion, that he was in this respect, as well as in many besides, the man of all others to manage

a Leicestershire field, the "spring captains" as they are called, especially. And this was not effected, as Dryden says, by

"——— rage and storm, and blasphemously loud,
As Stentor bellowing to a Grecian crowd ;"

but, as I have already said, by the natural influence which a man acquires, when he has attained excellence in his calling—be that calling what it may.*

I know not how or where Sir Bellingham Graham procured the first pack of hounds he became master of, but this much I know—namely that on his giving up Northamptonshire, he divided his kennel with Mr. Musters, who succeeded him, each master drawing alternate couples. On taking to the Quorn country, he purchased all but twenty-five couples of Mr. Osbaldeston's pack, together with eighteen of his horses. On the other hand, when Mr. Osbaldeston returned to Quorn, on Sir Bellingham leaving it, he (Sir B.) reserved the same number of hounds—viz., twenty-five couples, for which Mr. Osbaldeston gave him eleven hundred pounds ! This fact alone would establish Sir Bellingham Graham as a first rate judge of hounds ; but, in addition, it may be mentioned, that from a draft of about twenty couples from Mr. Osbaldeston's kennel, and a pack he purchased at the same time, 1818, (for, after the sale of the twenty-five couples to Mr. Osbaldeston, he was left houndless, if such a word may be used,) of Mr. Newnham, who had just resigned Worcestershire, containing a good deal of Lord Lonsdale's blood, did he lay the foundation of that beautiful and efficient pack with which he hunted Shropshire, the country in which he cried his last who—whoop—with his own hounds, at least.

But let us turn to Sir Bellingham Graham in Shropshire, where I passed six weeks under his roof. Here the same liberal hand that had directed all his operations in Leicestershire, was as actively employed both in his kennel and stables. In fact his hunting establishment was not reduced beyond the extent of about fifteen couples of hounds, and half a score of horses from that which he considered necessary for Leicestershire—his kennel containing nearly seventy couples of working hounds,—and his stable, thirty-five very effective horses !

Sir Bellingham Graham, like Mr. Musters, has been famous for having educated, if I may so express myself, some of the best hunting servants of the age. When

* The only instance I know of Sir Bellingham Graham "blowing up" an individual in the field, was by a pre-concerted plan between himself and the Hon. Capt. Berkeley, of the Thunderer. There was an immense field on that day, and so surrounded was the cover, that there appeared little chance of the fox being able to get away. "Go and place yourself at that point, the most likely for the fox to break," said Sir Bellingham to the Captain of the Thunderer, "and I will give you a thundering good blowing up ;" which he did ; and the captain stood it as coolly as no doubt he did the balls which flew about his ship on the Syrian coast.

in Shropshire he was admirably whipped-in to by Will Staples, now hunting one of the Shropshire packs with great *éclat*—son of old Tom Staples, many years huntsman to the late Lord Middleton,—and Jack Wrigglesworth, who had previously whipped-in to the late Sir Mark Sykes, and is now hunting another of the Shropshire packs. And as a judge of the animal *horse*, for all purposes, Sir Bellingham is excelled by no man, which is saying a great deal. None has a better eye to a coach-horse, and when he hunted Leicestershire, he was said to have had more *good big* horses in the Quorn stables, than they ever before contained—even in Lord Sefton's days.

There may have been, and there now may be better huntsmen than Sir Bellingham Graham. Comparisons are odious, and moreover out of place here ; neither is it necessary, or to be expected, that perfection is to be attained by any man in any station ; but no sportsman who has seen him in the field, can reasonably detract from the merits of the gentleman of whom I am now speaking. His fine horsemanship gave him great advantages ; and in proof of his success in one of the most trying countries in Great Britain,—all circumstances considered—may the fact be stated, of his having killed every fox he found in the country alluded to—the far-famed Quorn—for six consecutive weeks, with his old pack, which hunted twice a week ! It can also be stated, on equally good authority, that during the period of his hunting Leicestershire, he was never known to be away from his hounds when wanted, although at that time riding plum sixteen stone.

The real English gentleman—untainted by foreign fopperies—is sure to be popular with the yeoman and farmers of his neighbourhood, be his pursuits what they may. The master of hounds so constituted cannot fail of being popular and when Sir Bellingham Graham quitted the Atherstone country, he left behind him a great regard for his good name, and an universal regret at his departure. His gentlemanlike deportment, and the pleasing character of his conversation and manners, won the hearts of all who enjoyed an intercourse with him as friends ; and as a gentleman and a sportsman, he was esteemed by all. His hospitality was also on the most liberal scale, and his hunting establishment very splendid. He very materially contributed to keep up that gaiety in the neighbourhood which had been established in his predecessor's time, and it may be truly said, that Atherstone has never witnessed such doings since. The Earl of Stamford, then Lord Grey, resided, at the period I have been alluding to, at his mansion close to the town of Atherstone ; and his lordship, as well as Mr. Dugdale, many years M.P. for Warwickshire—whose seat is hard by—also contributed their share to promote the sociality of the neighbourhood.

To the period of Lord Anson, now Earl of Lichfield, taking possession of the

Atherstone country in 1820, was it reserved to make it—as some have called it—the third or fourth best hunting country in England. In the first place, in addition to Whetstone Gorse and Enderby, conceded to it in Sir Bellingham Graham's time, Lord Middleton bestowed upon it some of the finest woodlands that hounds were ever thrown into. These are situated on the Coventry and Dunchurch side of the country, and consist of Francton Woods, the property of the Rev. John Biddulph and others ; Coombe Abbey Woods, Lord Craven's ; the fine covers of Lord Denbigh, at Newnham Paddocks ; and the Brandon Woods, the property of the late Lord Grey de Ruthyn, now of the Marchioness of Hastings. From some of these covers—Newnham in particular—the finest runs might be expected, as a Leicestershire country is open to the foxes that are found in them ; and in such high repute are they held, that the *élite* from Melton Mowbray are often to be seen at their side, particularly in the spring of the year, more favourable to woodland fox-hunting. Nor is this all ; Sir Theophilus Biddulph added to it his famous gorse at Debdale, and several other covers on the southern side of Warwickshire, which, taken as a whole, formed what was called in Lord Lichfield's time, the Dunchurch country ; and a kennel was established at Dunchurch, where the hounds remained six or eight weeks in the year. The fine covers of Shugborough, two miles beyond Southam, on the Daventry road, at one time drawn exclusively by Sir Thomas Mostyn, at another by the Warwickshire, and at another neutral, were likewise added to the Dunchurch country, all of which enabled Lord Lichfield to hunt six days in the week. In return for this great addition of country, Lord Lichfield only gave up the Maxtocke Woods, and the covers north of the Thame, to Mr. Chadwicke, which were afterwards drawn by Mr. Shawe, who succeeded that gentleman.

The management of this country was Lord Lichfield's *debût* as master of a pack of fox-hounds, which, as new masters of hounds are often obliged to do, he picked up wherever he could put his hand upon them. The first lot he became possessed of was from Mr. Mytton, who then hunted Shropshire ; and subsequently from Sir Thomas Mostyn, and Mr. Musters, he procured his first pack. His Lordship's *debût* as a master of hounds was likewise his *debût* as a huntsman, and he matured into a good one. His hand and nerve in the saddle also progressed with the attainment of the science of the field ; for, from rather an indifferent performer, he quickly showed himself one of the very boldest and best horsemen of his day, which gave him a great advantage in his calling as huntsman to a pack of fox-hounds. Riding between thirteen and fourteen stone, he was obliged to pay high prices for his horse-flesh ; but the sort of animal suited to his taste was that which should please every man's taste who is six feet high, and resolved to be with his hounds.

It was, what is termed, a slapping upstanding horse, at least sixteen hands high, showing a vast deal of, if not full, blood, and with great length and strength. Few sportsmen's stables were in higher repute than that of Lord Lichfield, when he hunted the Atherstone country ; and he was often tempted by large sums offered for the horses he rode himself, being of course perfect at their trade. A few years since the Duke of Buccleuch gave him one thousand guineas for two of them.

As a master of fox-hounds too much cannot well be said to the honour and praise of Lord Lichfield. As we have before observed, he set about his task, as a tyro, with all the vigour of an enthusiast. In his kennel he was assisted by Woodington,—who came to him from Sir Bellingham Graham,—esteemed nearly the best kennel huntsman in England ; and in the field, he was ably whipped-in to by Roberts, and Jesse, very good men in their places—the former super-excellent. His Lordship resided during the hunting season (with the exception of the periods of his hounds hunting the Dunchurch country) at Atherstone Hall,* the property of Henry Bracebridge, Esq., and hunted the country nine seasons. An hereditary gout, however, extremely severe in its attacks, and such as would have stopped nine men out of ten, long before it stopped him, obliged him to give up his hounds.

On the retirement of Lord Lichfield, his Lordship having hunted it nine seasons, Sir John Gerard of Garswood Hall, near Prescott, Lancashire, offered himself to the Atherstone country, and was accepted, taking up his quarters at Kirkby Mallory Hall, near Hinckley, afterwards the property of the Earl of Wentworth, but since of Lady Byron, widow of the noble bard. The wealthy and generous Baronet purchased Lord Lichfield's hounds, and did not require the aid of the subscription which had been given to Mr. Osbaldeston and Sir Bellingham Graham, but encountered all the expenses with his own means. He, however, only kept possession of this fine country one year, when it passed into the hands of Mr. Applewhaite.

It has been justly observed, that he who never makes an effort, never risks a failure, and, “ in great attempts 'tis glorious to fail ! ” Sir John attempted to hunt his own hounds, and in that respect did not give the satisfaction to the country which a more experienced hand would have ensured. Mr. Applewhaite succeeded, but his performances I leave to the pens of those who have been in the country since his accession, a pleasure which has not yet been my lot.

* In consequence of Mr. Bracebridge requiring possession of his house, Lord Lichfield resided at Kirkby Mallory Hall the last year of his hunting.

CHAPTER IV



VERY few Charles Boulthees are to be met with, and no doubt but many gentlemen have acquired the name of being good riders to hounds who owe much of that fame to their horses. It is, indeed, only here and there that we find a man who can go to hounds, in a quick and straight run, on horses not perfect in their business. The late Richard Bradley, the famous Warwickshire horse-dealer, however, was one who could do this, and in a way that stamped him among the finest horsemen of any age. It is true, he seldom made his appearance with hounds on a horse that had not *something* of the reputation of being a hunter, but from the number of such animals in his possession, and the doubtful nature of

horse-selling credentials, he frequently found himself deceived, so that he was attacking some of the stiffest parts of Warwickshire, with a good scent, and a rare pack of hounds, on a raw, awkward horse. The man, however, is yet unborn who could say he saw Bradley not try to get to the end of a run, and very rarely was he not in a good place. But his fine riding was not thrown away upon him. It sold him some scores of hunters at very long prices, and was the occasion of very long faces when the owner of a newly-purchased horse found out that, without Bradley's finger, he had *not* purchased a *hunter*. Remonstrances, however, were vain—the dealer had an answer for them all :—" I am very sorry, sir, you cannot ride him ; but I only sold the horse. I *cannot* sell the rider." His nonpareil riding-boy (if I may so call him), Harry, was yet a greater artist than his master ; for it was admitted that three lessons—that is, three good runs—under his tuition, would complete the education of a hunter even for Lord Jersey. Bradley is dead—a loss to the sporting world, for he was an excellent judge—and Harry took to gin ; but this much I must say of them—I much question if their equals are to be found *in any one house*.

Speaking of making horses into hunters, I was struck as well as pleased with an expression that fell from the Duke of Buccleuch in my presence, the last time I was in Leicestershire. "I'll buy no more of these perfect old hunters," said his Grace, alluding to Jemmy Jumps and Alphabet, which he had just purchased from Lord Lichfield's stud, at some small change out of a thousand pounds. "I am young enough to make my own hunters, and I shall do so." I certainly saw his Grace the next day, in the field, upon a clever, thorough-bred young one, but considered him scarcely fit to carry so rich a Duke.

The Duke of Buccleuch commenced his mastership career as master of the Lothian hounds, having the good fortune to procure with them their famous huntsman William Williamson. From the immense wealth of their noble owner, together with his love of hunting, it is only natural to imagine that every thing that is wanting to make fox-hounds efficient was to be found in the hunting establishment of the Duke of Buccleuch ; at the same time it may be asserted, and to the benefit of others, that, by the superior management of their excellent huntsman, no hounds perhaps in Great Britain were kept at a less charge than that at which the Duke of Buccleuch's were kept. All they wanted, when I hunted with them six years back, was a better country ; but here is a compliment paid to his Grace as a master. The Duke of Buccleuch could hire the best house in one of the best of our countries, and, after the manner of Lord Plymouth, have his twenty-five hunters for his own riding ; but he would think it a dereliction of his duty thus to act. He feels himself imperatively called upon to spend the greater part of his time, and consequently his money, in his own country.

That the Duke of Buccleuch's hunting country (his Dalkeith one especially) is not a good one, all who have seen it must admit ; still a great set-off against such a drawback from the pleasures of the chase is the workmanlike manner in which his hounds are hunted by Williamson, and whipped in by Hugh Brown. Take him for all in all, Williamson is not equalled—certainly not excelled—by more than two or three of our servant-huntsmen, and it is a great treat to an admirer of hunting to see him in the field. Then his demeanour and language are of a superior order, and when he puts pen to paper, his description of a run casts Xenophon into the shade. I will quote a passage from one of his epistles, because the sentiments expressed in it, are precisely my own, and have been put into print by me, many years back.

"It is astonishing," says he, in the concluding sentence of a description of a fine run, "how one changes (i.e. in opinion), but it is not because I am getting old, and in course slow, I often wonder how my opinion about hounds *going fast*, has changed. You well know that I never thought they could go fast enough ; and

I am always thinking, if ever they go wrong, it is because they do not take enough of time to do it well. Not that I will ever advocate slowness, but I have got into the custom of never taking out more than sixteen couples, and, being in constant work and steady, nothing, I think, can excel the way in which they hang together, and the head they carry ; and I believe in the end they have performed their task sooner than when there is so much hurry, and when a check so often ends in confusion."

I concur in every sentiment here expressed. I have long been of opinion, that hounds may be bred to go too fast, and that most masters are over-hounded, if I may use such a term—and I see no reason why I should not, since that of over-horsed is allowed. With respect to the first point, extreme speed, the reason given for its necessity is the increased speed of hunting horses ; but surely this is a reflection on the character of the modern sportsman. Did he ride an Eclipse, is that a reason for his riding over, instead of near to hounds ? As regards the latter—excess of hounds—it cannot fail to be detrimental to sport—construing the word *sport*, as it should be construed, not as implying a burst of thirteen minutes, at a racing pace, but a run of an hour, in which hunting and hard running are displayed by turns,—in which many interesting circumstances arise,—and in the course of which time, a fox is hunted, and not raced to death. It is this racing pace at which hounds now go, which accounts for the paucity of runs, and the number of bursts. There are men now alive who hunted in Leicestershire in Mr. Meynell's time—that is to say, in the last thirty years of the last century, and I have heard from the lips of several, either now alive, or lately dead, that the runs over that country, were to much greater extent than they have been for the last twenty years. We all know by our experience, that a fox, bullied, as it were, at starting, is not only often induced to turn short back from the effect of sudden alarm, but, being afraid to make his point to any distant cover or earth, gets into the first drain or spout that will hide him.

The Duke of Buccleuch's country is abundantly stocked with foxes, which is proved by the fact of at least fifty brace being annually killed by his hounds in the Kelso and Dalkeith countries. And in one respect, Williamson goes the right way to keep up the stock. He draws the majority of his covers down wind, thus preventing the possibility of his foxes being caught napping, as too many are, when drawn for up wind. This is also liberal conduct in a huntsman, inasmuch as he gives his fox plenty of notice to get away, and consequently to bring his hounds to their noses sooner than if they went off close at his brush.

The Duke of Buccleuch's country is not without its difficulties. There is much stain of sheep, and what is worse, lots of sheep dogs always on the look out for a

fox, or any thing that may come in their way ; and the frequent changes of soil are also baffling to hounds. With these difficulties, however, Williamson contends with a master-hand, and I may be allowed to quote one passage alluding to him from my "Northern Tour." "His approach to his hounds, when at fault, pleased me much, he trots up to them with an anxious, but scrutinizing eye, and after a rapid glance at what they are doing, pulls up his horse to a stand, and with his hand raised in the air, calls to his field to *stand still*." He is not at all in a hurry, in fact I never saw him refuse to give his hounds a chance, so long as a chance remained.

In the Duke's own stud, I saw nineteen hunters, several of the best of which I had the honour to ride. No doubt some of these (old Alphabet for example,) were laid in at a high figure, whilst those ridden by Williamson and his men, although well suited to the country, having been selected with the cautious and scrutinizing eye of Williamson, were purchased at a low average, notwithstanding which, they were well adapted to the weights they had to carry—all light ones, and the country they had to cross.

There is every reason to believe that the Duke of Buccleuch, should his valuable life be spared, will one day or another be included in the list of those who have supported fox-hunting *upon principle*. That his Grace is fond of hunting, I am satisfied, but whether or not he sufficiently enters into the spirit of all that appertains to it, thereby adding to the numerous duties and cares his high station in society imposes upon him,—merely for the sake of the extra gratification of enjoying it with his own hounds,—is more than I can take upon myself to determine. I should rather incline to the opinion, that he considers fox-hunting, as I myself consider it,—to be one of the lion supporters of our crown, by fostering and promoting that manly spirit, and, when called for, that daring courage, which distinguishes the sons of Britain from all other nations of the world.

I remember two good ones of the name of Burton, and I cannot do better than produce them now. Who has not heard of Dick Burton ? He may be said to be indigenous to Leicestershire, having whipped in to Assheton Smith, as well as to Osbaldeston, having succeeded Tom Sebright, and then returned to Smith, his old, original master. It is impossible to improve upon the riding of this good servant, and previously to the desperate fall he had in Leicestershire, in which his pelvis was shattered by his horse rolling over him near Newtown Linford, it was delightful to see how, at his ease, he encountered the rough fences of that renowned country. This bad accident occurred about Christmas, 1824, for I remember his going brilliantly one day in the Christmas week from Owthorpe (Notts) in one of the best runs of the season, when almost all in the field were beat. As a whipper-in he gave numerous signal instances of quick eye to hounds

and country. On one occasion, from Cream Gorse—nearly the only man with the hounds, owing to a short turn that threw the leading men out and let him in—at the end of a dashing burst of forty minutes, he viewed the fox for nearly a mile before the pack, when he lay down in a field, and some of the leading hounds absolutely ran over him ; but of course his hour was come. Dick is honoured by a place in a capital picture by Ferneley, of Melton, painted for Sir H. Goodricke, representing hounds going *up-wind best pace*. He is among the chosen few, about half a dozen, I believe who have just cleared a wide brook, which affords more subjects for the pencil. In another picture, by the same artist, painted for “ the Squire,” of the Death of the Fox, Burton is to be seen in his proper place. Dick is worthy of the pencil, for he is one of the neatest and best-appointed fellows I ever saw in his situation, and one of the best kennel-huntsmen that England ever saw. I think he *looks the horseman* as much as any man I know.

Now comes Captain Burton—and after a well-graced actor too. But he is a good horseman, and his knowledge of Leicestershire, where he has resided long, is a great advantage to him with hounds. He is esteemed a very good judge of a hunter.

Mr. Blount, of Crabbet, Sussex, an old Meltonian and a Waterloo man, claims honourable mention here, having often distinguished himself in a quick thing ; he appears on the canvas in Sir Holyoake Goodricke’s picture on his favourite horse, Skylark, having just got well over a wide brook.

There are few more fearless riders than Mr. Middleton Biddulph, and not many who can ride much better to hounds. He has been a frequent resident at Melton, where, with a small stud, seldom exceeding eight, he has had quite his share of fame, in the midst of such powerful competitors.

Of Sir Francis Burdett it is scarcely necessary to say more than to repeat a question put by one of the hardest riders in England to a large party at Melton—namely, “ Has any man seen Sir Francis Burdett refuse a fence which any other man rode at or over ? ” Again :—“ Have we not all of us seen Sir Francis Burdett frequently ride at fences which other hard-riding men have refused ? ” But does the character of a dauntless rider comprise all that is wanting in Leicestershire ? Certainly not, nor in any other country ; but I have heard several of my Leicestershire friends say, that it very seldom happened that Sir Francis was not in his place, at all points of a run. And why should he not be ? He was well mounted, and there are few things which he has attempted to do that we have not found him do well. I am sorry to hear that he has given up the chase, for I always liked to see him with hounds.

From all I have heard and read of him, in addition to what I have seen, I think

I am justified in saying the world never saw a much abler rider to hounds than Mr. John Bower, who resided and hunted in Yorkshire, but who was also well known and much looked up to in the Burton Hunt, Lincolnshire, and has shone now and then in Leicestershire. His hand and seat gave one an idea of perfection at first sight ; and expectation was more than realized when he set to work to get to hounds ; and having got with them it must be something quite out of the common way that could separate him from them, let the pace be what it might. He had also another good quality, not always accompanying such high pretensions as his, in the field : he had no conceit, and, I may add, no jealousy. I conclude, however, there was a time when he was now and then a little too fast for the day, as I remember reading in the “ Operations of the Raby Pack ” the following good-natured rebuke, which I conceived applied to him * ; but I may be wrong :—“ A very good run,” says the noble historian, “ but unfortunately lost by Mr. J. B., an excellent sportsman, who never means to do wrong, but from great keenness is sometimes too forward, which, as an old sportsman, I claim a right to say to him.” This is a more effectual way of checking a young one than all the public rating a master of hounds could give him ; and I have often thought the best results would arise if every master of hounds would follow the Duke of Cleveland’s example, and publish at the end of every season not only the sport of each day, but allude to any unsportsmanlike act that may have been committed—distinguishing, however, as his Grace has here done, between the now and then pardonable keenness of a young and promising sportsman, and a flagrant, unsportsmanlike action. I am well convinced of the good effects which would arise from this plan, as no one would like being shown up in the “ black book.” Mr. R. Bower, brother to this renowned rider, was likewise a good sportsman and a straightforward rider to hounds—both being sons of Major Bower, of Weltham, near Malton, Yorkshire, of great grey-hound notoriety.

When I was in the Holderness country, in Yorkshire, where I witnessed the performance of these two justly-celebrated sportsmen, I was just too late to see a noble feat of horsemanship by a gentleman of the name of Brymer, then a subaltern in the 5th Dragoon Guards. He rode at and cleared one of those drains which abound in that country, in chase, and it was said to measure eight yards in the clear !! I was shown the drain, which appeared quite to equal the extent given to it, and also to be the *widest* place I ever saw leaped, except one brook which Mr. Mytton leaped in my presence for a lark. Mr. Brymer’s horse was purchased by him, at

* The initials may have applied to some other gentleman. B stands for Baird, and doubtless other hard riders in the north ; so all I have to say is, I crave pardon for my temerity in fixing on Mr. Bower. No man, however, need murmur at such a rebuke.

a long price, from the stud of the Hon. Edward Petre, when he gave up the Bosworth hounds, and had the reputation of being the best water-jumper in Yorkshire.

A person who, like myself, has seen so many first-rate artists in the field, must be very slow indeed if he cannot discern something good or bad about a man who appears in the character of a horseman at first sight. I take no credit, then, for assuring myself that Mr. John Bower was an artist the first time I saw him with hounds—I mean before much business was done ; nor for asking Sir Henry Peyton “ who Captain Becher was ? ” after witnessing his style of putting his horse to his fence in a little skurry over Oxfordshire, the first time I came across him. Captain Becher is now become *signal*, and what was, at the time I am speaking of, considered a great thing to do—namely, his following Sir Henry, on *Lepidus*, with a young horse, over Stead Park wall, five feet four inches high, retires before his late extraordinary performances as a steeple-chase rider. It has before fallen to my lot to record one gallant act of the Captain’s, which was to persevere to the end of the renowned Leicestershire steeple-chase, after the summerset I saw him get at the third fence, and without the slightest chance of reaping the reward of his daring. But in two or three of those *aces* as we should call them, which he has since ridden—particularly on Colonel Charitie’s Napoleon against that out-and-outer “ the Squire,” upon the equally celebrated nag, Grimaldi, when the six miles, over a stiff country, were done in twenty-one minutes and a few seconds, swimming the river Leam into the bargain—he may be said to have out-stripped himself.

I “ take them as they come,” as the saying is—that is, as they present themselves to my recollection, so, as their name begins with a B, we will have peep at the Berkeleys. Lord Segrave was never what is called a forward rider, but made up by a good eye, and the pace, for time lost at fences ; which time, considering how well he has generally been mounted, I have been much at a loss to account for. Indeed, somewhat of an anomaly has attended his lordship’s system of riding over a country, and this is—he will not stop at a good brook, or hedge and ditch, but is shy of a four-foot wall. Now, as far as my experience has led me to appreciate the chances of falls, I have always considered them to be at least ten to one in favour of brooks before walls, which, built as they are in his country, are, in my opinion, the safest leaps, proportioned to their height, that a sportsman has to encounter in chase. A stranger, however, must be much struck with the comparative rapidity with which Lord Segrave gets to his hounds over the Gloucestershire hills, considering that on an average he alights at, at least, one wall in four. This is the result of several combined causes. First, he is a good horseman, pulling up and starting his horse again quickly ; secondly, his horses are admirably broken to the act of following their rider over the fence, the instant he himself has got over it ;

and lastly, Lord Segrave has an excellent eye to his hounds, and goes the best pace when he is up. I never saw him ride a run in the Berkeley Vale, but I was out once in Warwickshire when he went *very well* from Alveston Pastures, over a stiff country.

My first knowledge of Lord Segrave's country was when part of it was hunted by the late Major Bland, a very worthy gentleman, but not, I think, a very eminent sportsman. I say "I think," because in those young days in which I hunted with him, my estimate of a sportsman was a false one. The best man in the field in my eyes was he who could ride hardest after his hounds, and leap the highest gates, and I believe the worthy major did neither the one nor the other. In short, all that I have a perfect recollection of, in reference to hunting with his hounds, is one good run, in which I first saw a very distinguished character in that country, and now a member of Lord Segrave's hunt, of whom I shall have something to say anon.

Neither can I remember when I first hunted with Lord Segrave's hounds, but as it was many years before Mr. Corbet relinquished Warwickshire, when we every now and then reached them from Stratford-upon-Avon, in their Broadway country, it must have been in his lordship's young days as well as in my own. But I can very well recollect the *last* time I was out with this pack, as it was nearly proving my last appearance with all packs, for I was taken ill after the second day's hunting, in consequence of a damp bed, and, as old Johnny Wynne of Ryton said of his son, "turned rather a narrow headland" for my life. But several times in my life I have had horses at Cheltenham in the winter season for a week or so, when Lord Segrave's hounds have been at their kennel there, and of course know most of their covers. Indeed, one of these periods is well impressed on my memory, by the fact of my selling a horse for three hundred guineas, which a short time before had cost me one hundred guineas, and merely because "the pace was too good to inquire" whether three or four gates in our line were made to open or not.*

During my visit to Sir Bellingham Graham, in 1828, when he hunted Shropshire, the worthy baronet and myself had an invitation from Lord Segrave to spend a week at Berkeley Castle, where horses and every thing that is good were to be provided for our use; but in consequence of Will Staples meeting with an accident, Sir Bellingham could not absent himself from his hounds, and we lost, no doubt, a most agreeable trip. Now I lament this the more, because, independently of the pleasure of hunting in a new and, I hear, a very pretty country, and seeing a splendid hunting establishment, I should much have liked to have seen the castle, in all its baronial pride, and perhaps my fancy might have promoted me to have said something about it. I might have been tempted to have drawn a comparison

* The race-horse Bolus, by Doctor. Lord William Somerset will remember this.

between past and present times—between one lord of this noble domain who jested with the sufferings of a monarch, and another who would lay down his life for his ; I might have turned to that dark age when Severn re-echoed “ with affright ” not the note of the fox-hound, but the shriek of “ an agonized king : ” not the heart-cheering horn, but the rebel’s bloody war-whoop. And I might have done even more than this. I might have drawn from these reflections one striking fact—that fox-hunting and refinement started together in England, and who will deny but that it has been a neck-and-neck race.

But to our present purpose. It is scarcely necessary to state, that Lord Segrave has two countries, which his hounds hunt alternate months,—commencing in his own, the Berkeley, on the first of October, and removing to the Cheltenham country on the first of November. His establishment and his turn out are quite *en prince*, and the superior style of horse which his men ride, imparts a lustre over the whole thing. Whenever I have been out with his hounds, his lordship has always officiated as huntsman, but he had a clever man in that capacity—Henry Ayris—who may be said to have been cradled in these kennels, and I have reason to believe he is a very superior horseman. His first whipper-in was a son of Dick Foster, huntsman to Mr. Villebois, bringing a high character with him from the Badsworth hounds ; and Henry Skinner was the second whip. In addition to these there were two men in scarlet, and capped, riding his lordship’s spare horses, thus equalling the *matériel* of any hunting establishment going. But having spoken of his men, I must not overlook his head groom, George Smith. He was born at Berkeley ; stood six feet three inches without his shoes, and was altogether so fine a sample of British flesh and blood, that he was selected to lead the Champion’s horse at the coronation of George the Fourth. The stud under his care consisted of thirty-six hunters besides hacks, and the kennels contained eighty couples of hunting hounds.

Lord Segrave’s two countries, united, extend without interruption to seventy miles in length, namely, from the city of Bristol to Meenhill in Warwickshire, which is the outside cover in the Cheltenham hunt ! The Berkeley is almost wholly a grass country, very flat, and teeming with scent, but liable to the objection of rather small enclosures, and bounded on one side by the river Severn, which is a drawback. When I say it is flat, however, I must except the fine woodlands on the hills above Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge, extending to Kingscote, but these are chiefly used for cub and spring hunting. It abounds in foxes, particularly in Lord Segrave’s covers, and as a hint for game-preservers, who think pheasants and foxes cannot co-exist, I will mention a circumstance which happened a few years back. The fixture for the day was Fisher’s Withy-bed, not more than a

mile from the castle, and little more than two acres of ground. Three brace and a half of foxes were viewed away from the cover, and at least two hundred brace of pheasants were seen on the wing. I remember my informant telling me, that Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith was to have been out on that day, being on a visit at Lord Ducie's, but was prevented so doing, which Lord Segrave lamented. "I wish Smith had been here to-day," said Lord Segrave to his field, "that he might have assured game-preservers, from what he would have seen in this cover, that they need not be so much in fear of foxes."

Lord Segrave only professes to hunt the Berkeley country three days a week, but frequently gives a bye-day. The best covers in it are, Bushey Grove, Red Wood, Hill's Wood, Nuster Cliff Gorse, Parham Brake, Fishing-house Withy-bed, Newman's Withy-bed, Haywood, Tockington Park, Elmore, Clifford's Gorse, Tortworth Coppice, Tintock, Friar's Wood, Michel Wood, and Butler's Gorse. Lord S. has also made many capital gorse and black-thorn covers on his own estate. In the Cheltenham country—including what is called the Broadway country, in which there is a kennel at Buckland—the favourite covers are Star Wood, Chedworth, Withington Wood, Rendcomb Wood, Comb End, Moor Wood, West Wood, Guiting-grange Gorse, Dowdeswell Wood, Chatcombe Wood, Stanton Wood, Dumbleton Wood, Hales Wood, and Queen Wood. Foxcote Gorses (Mr. Canning's), Weston Park, Bourton Wood, Buckland Wood, Spring Hill, Meen Hill,* and several good gorses—the last five fixtures hunted from the Buckland kennel.

These three countries—for such in fact they are—are thus hunted. Lord Segrave, as I said before, opens the season in the Berkeley country, on the first of October, and then hunts that, and *the Cheltenham and Broadway countries united*, alternate months throughout the season. His Broadway fixtures are thus reached. The hounds and horses travel thither—the hounds to Buckland kennel, and the horses to Broadway—on the Friday, the only non-hunting day in the week, and return to Cheltenham on the Sunday, the distance twenty miles. This is a severe tax on the kennel and stable, and still more so on the servants, who, it will appear, are, in open weather, every day in their saddles. Their noble master, however, has long shared the labour with them, barring the hack work between Cheltenham and Broadway, as himself and several of his hunt remove to Broadway on the Friday, to be ready for Saturday's hunting, and as I have before stated, Lord Segrave has generally hunted his own hounds. Some persons may ask—is not this making a toil of a pleasure? The real lover of fox-hunting answers—*No*. Of course his lordship has spared no pains in procuring horse-flesh to carry

* Meen Hill is neutral with the Warwickshire.

himself, but the greater part of his own horses have been those which were purchased originally for the men, and have turned up trumps. Indeed, one of his most favourite hunters was called *Trumps*, and I am told he had two other splendid ones in his stable—*Manton* and *Workman*, the former purchased at Mr. Maxse's sale. Blood Royal, perhaps one of the finest horses ever seen, and who carried him for so many successive years, died in his service after having enjoyed two years total respite from labour. To my eye, that horse was faultless—combining blood and power to a vast degree, each so essential to Lord Segrave's peculiar style of riding to his hounds, and also to his Cheltenham country, perhaps as severe as any one in England or elsewhere, that is hunted by fox-hounds. Let a horse carry Lord Segrave's weight *with hounds*, on a good scent from the bottom of Dowdeswell Wood to Leckhampton Rocks—no great distance—and I pronounce him able to do any thing that a hunter may be called on to perform. Having never seen the kennels at Berkeley Castle, I cannot give any description of them, but those with the stables, situated within a quarter of a mile of Cheltenham, are quite equal to all the purposes required of them, and the former are very healthy for hounds. His lordship resides at German Cottage, in the town of Cheltenham, where the members of his hunt are most hospitably entertained. Two hundred horsemen are often to be counted in his field.

Lord Segrave is becoming an old master of fox-hounds, having kept them first as Lord Dursley, in the late Earl Berkeley's lifetime, and in all, twenty-six successive years ; and it must be admitted that he has honoured fox-hunting, perhaps above his fellows, by persevering as he has done in hunting a very indifferent country, which the Cheltenham country certainly is, for so long a period of time, and in the first style of liberality and splendour. In fact, his establishment has been quite equal to the Quorn, or any other of the crack countries, and his sport, upon the whole, has been allowed to have been good. The two last seasons I hunted with them were the best his hounds ever had, affording a long succession of fine runs during the greater part of each. Indeed, on the authority of one of the first sportsmen in his hunt, I can relate one run as a sample, and I believe it has not been surpassed, for I know the line well, and it abounds in fox-hunting difficulties. The fox was found in West Wood, between Cheltenham and Winchcomb ; and, *after taking quite an outside ring* (approaching the town of Winchcomb), he put his head straight for Lord Bathurst's "Great Woods," as they are called, near Cirencester, and was pulled down, in the open, within one field of them, at a distance of twenty miles, as the crow flies, from the cover in which he was found ! ! * This run reminds us of real fox-hunting. Of his lordship's hounds, it would be

* Lord Segrave, Mr. Craven Berkeley, and one or two more, were all who saw the finish.

presumptuous in me to speak, from the limited acquaintance I have had with them. But to *one* point I can speak. Many years ago, when we got a day now and then with them from Warwickshire, we used to think that, looking at them comparatively with other packs, they appeared somewhat too high in flesh for the hilly country we met them in. But of late years this defect, if it did exist, has been remedied, and no hounds need be in better condition than when I last saw them, nor, I may add, more handy.

Although I have characterized the Cheltenham country as one not deserving of praise—nay, I fear I must pronounce it a bad country—there are parts of it which can show sport and exhibit hounds to advantage, the enclosures being large, often extending to from eighty to one hundred and fifty acres each, and the covers not too near each other. As in all wall countries hounds can carry a head when there is a scent, well bred horses are required over the Cotswold Hills, which form a great part of the country we are speaking of; but the fences are not difficult, after horses and their riders become accustomed to them. All this, however, depends upon the pace. A hunter, with a horseman on his back, would not fall over one Gloucestershire wall in ten thousand, “if let to go *his own pace* at them,” as the late Lord Forester used to say; but when the wind is pumped out of them by “*the pace*,” I beg to decline insuring them. But even in that case, a blown horse does not come *rump first* over a wall, as he does over strong timber, wall and horse generally coming to the ground together. In short, for one fall I have seen in wall countries, I am sure I have seen a score in others, in an equal number of runs; and it is surprising how few horses are cut or blemished by striking them.

The Berkeley Hunt Club consists of about thirty members, who dine together at Cheltenham twice or three times in the season. Their field uniform is a scarlet coat with black velvet collar, on which is embroidered a silver fox with a gold brush, much after the fashion of the Raby Hunt collar. The dress uniform is handsome and unique. It consists of a black coat, lined throughout with scarlet silk; buff breeches, and buff satin waistcoat—the *tout ensemble* of which has a very showy effect in a ball-room, particularly if the wearer and the raiment are well matched. In 1826, the Club invited Lord Segrave—then Colonel Berkeley—to dinner, for the purpose of evincing their gratitude for the sport he had afforded themselves and their friends. A superb gold cup, *value four hundred guineas*, was the splendid offering of the day, presented to him, on the cloth being removed, by my much esteemed friend Mr. Browne, of Slaperton (a large landed proprietor within the hunt, and called to the chair in the absence of the Marquis of Worcester), at the conclusion of a neat, complimentary address. The cup stands two feet six inches in height, and is capable of containing a dozen bottles of wine. Its

embellishments are strictly in keeping. Amongst others are the four seasons ; casts from favourite hounds, from a picture at Berkeley Castle ; masks of horses' heads from the antique ; a vixen fox and her cubs ; an inscription signifying the gift, and the Berkeley Arms displayed. Lord Segrave's speech was highly appropriate ; but the tongue is eloquent when the heart dictates—and one part of it was so strictly in accordance with my estimation of the value and benefits of fox-hunting, that I shall take the liberty of transcribing it. "In ranking fox-hunting high among our pleasures," said his lordship, "I think I shall be borne out by the concurrent opinion of many of the most brilliant and highly-educated members of society ; and I will take upon myself to pronounce it to be an amusement wholly without alloy. I have followed it for twenty years ; and with truth I can aver, that it has cheered my cheeriest hours, and invariably solaced some of my saddest moments. It has been the bond of union, the source of lasting friendship ; and whilst it enlivens the present day, it brings in its train all the most agreeable recollections of 'Auld lang syne.' I can assure you, my friends," added Lord Segrave, "that when the grim huntsman, who never misses his game, shall be about to run me to my last earth, I shall derive consolation in leaving behind me this mark of your friendship and esteem." To all this I say, *Amen*. May fox-hunting flourish for ages to come ! Nay, more than this—may it remain the favourite pastime of Englishmen till the moon shall be in its last wane, and the sun shall cease to shine on the world !

But, out of the field, the public conduct of Lord Segrave in his character of an English sportsman that most pleased me, was his speech at the Gloucester race ordinary, 1827, in animadversion of an anathema pronounced by an evangelical clergyman of the neighbourhood, and very widely circulated by a sect calling itself "the serious part of the community of the Church of England," against the sports and pastimes of the people, and denouncing horse-racing in particular. In the first place, I well remember that, on reading this speech, I knew not which most to admire, the neatness and force of the language, the judiciously and happily selected arguments, or the manly avowal of the speaker ; all which, coming from a man who, although a supporter of the races in his neighbourhood, never had a race horse in his life, or, as he stated to his audience, never betted fifty pounds on a race, had of course a double effect. Now the author of this anathema is totally unknown to me ; but I must tell all those who think and act with him, that it is a mistaken enthusiasm which strews fire and flame in the paths of our innocent amusements. *Christianity forbids them not*. On the contrary, the doctrines by which we hope for rewards are friendly to harmless recreations, and hostile to that squalid superstition which would strip society of its pleasures, and defraud mirth

of its smile. The thorn grows with the rose, and vice will intrude among men ; but he is a bold man who adds to the severity of God, and thinks we stand more in need of his justice than his mercy. There is a road to heaven without suffering by the way ; and I had been led to hope that the vulgar association of groans and tears with piety and devotion was now confined to the half-enlightened understandings of itinerant preachers, and that no well-educated clergyman would be found to insist upon what human nature rejects. I again ask—shall “ the hills rejoice and the valleys laugh and sing,” and man alone go sorrowful on his journey ? Pshaw ! Man is the same now that he was in the days of Solomon ; he must, and *will* be amused if he can : nay, more,—rational amusements and innocent recreations have ever been considered essential to his very existence, and of these, the master of fox-hounds or the owner of race-horses contributes his share, if not a good deal more.*

There are several eminent riders in Lord Segrave’s hunt some of whom have been acknowledged as such in Leicestershire. Amongst the best are the Hon. Craven Berkeley, Messrs. Joseph Watts (a welter), Walters, Wynniatt, Cregoe, Bailey, Doyne, John Coddington, his brother-in-law, Mr. John Charlton, and Captain Jenner ; the latter, I should think, the top sawyer of the light weights, from what I saw and heard of him in Leicestershire, where he hunted four seasons. The renowned Mr. Maxse is an old member of the club, and always passes the October month at the castle ; and Mr. Robert Canning now and then makes his appearance with these hounds.

Having passed a good deal of time at Cheltenham at various periods of my life, it may be expected that I depart not from my usual practice of describing the head quarters of hounds. But what can I say of Cheltenham, that is not known to all the pleasurable and half the sporting world ? I might as well present a history of Cheapside to a London citizen, or remind a first-class school-boy of the baths of Dioclesian. I shall merely observe, then, that when I first knew Cheltenham it was little more than a good country village, and it is now grown into a large town. But has it not been denounced as a dangerous scene of gallantry and dissipation, “ *castis inimica puellis*,” as the poet says of Baiæ. To be sure it has ; and where is

* I am quite aware of the efforts now making by some of these *maxime pii* gentlemen to strip the world of its pleasures, by denouncing innocent recreations, and to substitute the gloom and severity of a presbyterian Scotchman, for the native cheerfulness of an Englishman. I trust they will not succeed ; and let those who speculate on the change, read the comment of the Morning Chronicle, a few months back, on the present state of the lower orders of the Scotch people, and the coarse indulgences by which they indemnify themselves for harmless amusements of which they are debarred by the austerity of a religion, which I, for one, hope they will keep to themselves. Surely we have had enough of saints, and should by this time be assured that there is no villany which cannot mask itself under the show of piety.

the place, where *water* is the specific, that has not borne a similar character. "Est Venus in *vinis*," said Ovid, but water-drinkers, believe me, succeed best with the ladies. I rather think, however, it was always so. The chastity of Alexander is ascribed, by his historian, to his excessive computations; and depend on it, friend Reader, that the wife of Darius—for they say she was pretty—would not have escaped so immaculate from the clutches of a Cheltenham water-drinker as she did from his. By way of reminding you that these *water places* have ever been licentious, let me bring to your recollection the lines addressed by the love sick Propertius to his beautiful Cynthia, who was gone to pass the summer at the baths of Baicæ; as they plainly show in what manner the Roman ladies were given to amuse themselves at that delightful place. I'll not bother you with the original Latin, but you shall have an elegant translation of the impassioned address from the pen of one of our best modern classics, accompanied—as a foil to it—by a paraphrase of my own:

"Fly, fly, my love, soft Baicæ's tainted coast,
Where many a pair connubial peace have lost;
Where many a maid shall guilty joys deplore:
Ah fly, my fair, detested Baicæ's shore!"

PARAPHRASE.

"Husband—look after your wife;
Old one—take care of your daughter;
If you don't, I'll venture my life,
They'll be 'led, like sheep, to the slaughter.'"

Notwithstanding all this, had I been assured of not meeting a Dolabella there, I should like just to have taken a peep at the world in those days, and to have passed one summer at this gay place (for Horace says—"nullus in orbe locus Baiis præluet amænis"), as it would have enabled me to tell you how they managed their amours in those classic days; and if I were twenty years younger than I now am, well-horsed and well-breeched, I should not object to a winter at Cheltenham.

Few characters take my fancy more than the English sporting yeomen; but mind, reader, I mean the yeomen after the old form and fashion, and not the green-jacketed white top-booted, would-be-gentleman, whom we have lately seen running at his landlord, with about as much chance of catching him as the two hind wheels of his waggon have of catching the two fore ones. Of the first named genus, there have been long going in Lord Segrave's country, two very pure and unadulterated samples—namely the well-known Mr. Fretwell—better known as "Tommy Fretwell;" and the still better known "Jerry Hawkins, of the Haw," for if I were to call him *Mr.* Hawkins it might be doubtful of whom I am speaking. The former of these worthy men has now wisely retired from

the pursuits of agriculture, and is living at his ease in the village of Prestbury, near Cheltenham ; but Jerry Hawkins still farms his own estate of the Haw, which has descended to him from his ancestors.

Of Tommy Fretwell as a sportsman, it would be needless for me to speak, if your pages did not travel into very remote countries, for Tommy and his old white mare have at one time or another been seen by most modern sportsmen. He was never conspicuous as a horseman, but greatly so for his admitted knowledge of hunting, and his almost constant attendance upon hounds with a short stable of horses. In fact, he has been a real enthusiast in fox-hunting, and the respectability of his character, and the esteem of his neighbours and brother sportsmen at a distance, have been of some value in the preservation of foxes in the several countries in which he has hunted—namely, the Duke of Beaufort's, Lord Segrave's, and the Warwickshire.

But Jerry Hawkins requires more space in your pages as the record of sporting character, for I honestly believe the sun never rose upon the man who is better entitled to the appellation of sportsman than he is. Such of your readers then as have never seen this renowned Jerry, or been within fifty miles of Gloucester, where his portrait—an exact likeness—on his old favourite horse, and in the act of holloaing away a fox, was a few years back to be found on ten ale jugs out of twenty, would like perhaps to have a description of him, which, as his like will never be seen again, I will endeavour to furnish. But it won't do on these occasions to be too minute in our detail. Suffice it then to say, that his person is somewhat beyond the medium height : features hard, but very far from unpleasing ; complexion dark and swarthy, and by no means that of a water-drinker ; the lines of the face very strongly marked, and every muscle about him bearing some resemblance to whip-cord. His dress, a blue coat, generally double-breasted, striped waistcoat, leather * breeches, very tight but not particularly clean ; boots, &c., to match. He was born on the same day with the late Duke of York.

The anecdotes of Jerry, and his peculiarities, would fill a good sized volume, but I must select a few ; and as they chiefly relate to his passion for fox-hunting, they cannot be unacceptable to my readers. What think you, then, of his postscript to a letter he had once occasion to write to *an election committee*, sitting at Gloucester, in the interest of Sir William Guise ? “ I have reason to believe,” said Jerry, “ as there was a fox through Badgeworth Wood, Saturday night or Sunday morning, early.” On another occasion, he stopped at a road-side ale-house to refresh his horse after a run, in which were some yokels drinking and

* We believe Jerry has retrograded in the fashion, having subsequently taken to white cords, or rather “ *qui color albus erat.*”

singing, without any notice being taken of them by Jerry. At last they thought they would pay him the compliment of striking up one of the songs of the chase, the chorus to which was—

“There’s nothing can compare
With the hunting of the *hare*.”

Now it happens that Jerry had not only a thorough contempt for hare-hunters, but, moreover, it is much doubted whether he did not suspect that a man *not devoted to fox-hunting* * would rob a church or cut your throat. However, this matter was very easily settled. Having as thorough contempt for rhyming as he has for hare-hunting, he gave the bumkins a shilling to substitute the word *fox* for *hare*, when he listened to their ditty with great glee. Again—he happened to have a breeding earth † on his farm. Some years back, he made his will and bequeathed this field to Lord Segrave and his heirs for ever, lest, as he said, it might fall into the hands of some d—d fellow, not a friend to foxes, and the earths be destroyed. On his lordship hearing of the bequest, however, he made Jerry cancel the clause in his will. Anticipating old age, or any other infirmity that might disable him from taking the field, Jerry has built a tower on one part of his property which commands a view of the country, from which he says he can *see* the hounds if he can’t *follow* them. Some time since, Jerry had been indisposed, and *change of air* was recommended by his doctor. Jerry fixed upon Berkeley Castle, little more than twenty miles from his own house. Calling, however, on Captain Jenner, in the village of Berkeley, on his road to the castle, just as his dinner-bell rang, Jerry partook of his pot luck ; and having got a skinful of wine, returned home early the next morning, “*quite recovered by change of air*,” as he told his friends and the doctor.

When Lord Segrave came of age a grand ball was given at the castle, which was honoured by the presence of his late Majesty, then Duke of Clarence. Jerry Hawkins had an invitation to it, and his wardrobe being over-hauled for the occasion, he was found wanting only in a new pair of kerseymere breeches, which were deemed absolutely necessary for the royal presence ; and for the first and last time of his life, his hair was powdered. Now Jerry bethinking himself that

* Jerry was dining one day at Cheltenham, in company with Mr. Dawkins, a great amateur actor, a gentleman well known “about town,” when, by way of something to say, Jerry asked him if he was fond of fox-hunting, to which Mr. Dawkins answered, “that he had never been out in his life.” “Why, to tell you the truth,” said Jerry, looking him over, “*I thought you hadn’t seen much of the world!*”

† This reminds me of a certain northern sportsman, himself a master of fox-hounds, who having a property in the centre of another hunt, made drains in all directions for the foxes to run to, and in case he should not be able to spoil sufficient sport in his lifetime, has directed in his will that they should be kept open for twenty years after his death, on pain of forfeiture.



JEREMIAH HAWKINS, a noted Yeoman, with some hounds of COLONEL BERKELEY'S Hunt. In the act of finding. From a mezzotint by W. DUNKARTON after F. TURNER, dating from 1814. The print lent by Messrs. Fores. See *Nimrod's* character-sketch of Hawkins.



THE SPORTING TAYLOR OF CHELTENHAM, HASTINGS, hunting on foot with Lord Segrave. "I say, my Lord, it is only you and I can take this. There's a devil of a yawner on the other side!" Plate 8 in HENRY ALKEN'S *Sporting Anecdotes*, published by Ackermann in 1834. *From a soft-ground Etching by H. Alken, in General Cowie's Collection.*

dress breeches, and dress breeches only, would be rather an unprofitable article in his wardrobe, had them so shaped as to answer the united purposes of the ball room and the saddle. They were cut longer at the knee than dress breeches should be cut, and, having an eye to the future, an extra button was placed at the back of the leg, for the boot. This button was not lost on the royal duke, who, no doubt, was made acquainted with the character of the man ; and by way of a joke, he addressed him thus :—" Pray, Mr. Hawkins, do you ever wear boots ? " " Please your Royal Highness," replied Jerry, "*I very seldom wear shoes.*" Lord Alvanley could not have given a readier answer. There was a good deal of the "*nemo me impune*" about it and much in the style of the old Squire Leche, of Cheshire, of whose sayings and doings I fear I have at length exhausted my stock.

The hardiness peculiar to the old English yeoman was never more displayed than by one practice which Jerry Hawkins indulged in, occasionally, for the greater part of his life. I allude to his swimming the river Severn with his horse, on his return from Gloucester market, at night, by way of a shorter cut to the Haw, which is situated on the banks of that fine river, on the Tewkesbury side of the county. Now the question arises—how has it happened that Jerry never went to the bottom some tempestuous night, as it is well known he generally brought home a top-heavy load, and as often performed this fool-hardy feat in the dark nights of winter as under the more favourable circumstances of a midsummer night's moon ? Why, although we cannot compare Jerry with Leander, inasmuch as he was not risking his life for his mistress, but merely going the nearest way to his sheets, yet like him he had something to direct him to the opposite shore. But it was not the torch planted on the tower's top, which at last proved fatal to the bold youth of Abydos, but the stable lanthorn, which was always hung on a post at the " coming out place," when the night was dark ; and Jerry was sure to find his road into the river, leather breeches and all.

I must offer one more anecdote of Jerry, and then take my leave of him for the present. Some thirty years since, a celebrated Irish duellist, a dead shot, was quartered at Gloucester, only then recovering from a wound he had received in somewhere about his tenth encounter on the bloody field ; and so great was the dread of this modern Marcellus, that few persons had a fancy to encounter him in any way, still less at twelve paces. He soon, however, contrived to make himself signal by calling out a professional gentleman, with a large family dependant on his exertions, but who wisely declined putting his life on a level with one that appeared so valueless as his. " Very well then," said the captain, " all I require is that when I walk up one side of the street, the gentleman will walk up the other." Now this reaching Jerry's ears, an invitation to the Captain to dine at the Haw

followed, and was accepted, and two hard-headed neighbours were asked to meet him. Dinner passed off well (*Jerry's hospitality is proverbial*); the Captain pleased and civil. When the table was cleared, however, our host withdrew, but returned in a few minutes with a massive old silver tankard in his hand, which contained two quarts. Now with what, think you, was this tankard filled? with Sherbet? for it was in the dog days. No. With Stier cider or Barland perry? for each of which Jerry is renowned. With neither, but *with red hot port wine*? Anything else? Yes, it contained a graduated stick, with notches cut in it at certain distances, after the manner of a carpenter's rule. Then followed Jerry's speech to his company! "Captain," said he, "I've heard a great deal about you, and, among other things, that you are a terrible man to drink. Now, Captain, I wish to see which is the best man of us four; and we *must* all drink alike out of this tankard, if each man lowers it one notch to each toast, so here's *fox-hunting*, Captain;" and, as the story goes, Jerry lowered it two notches instead of one. Now then for the sequel. The Captain found himself tackled by a tough British yeoman, and, although he got very drunk, he behaved very well. But Jerry's speech at parting was a climax; it was like that of Ajax, short, but strong. "Now, Captain," said he, "good night; but let me tell you one thing. There will always be found an Englishman to do what an Irishman can do, so I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll ride a fox-chase with you, Captain; I'll swim Sivern (Severn) with you, Captain; I'll drink with you, Captain; I'll walk with you, Captain; and *dim** my soul, Captain, if I don't fight you to-morrow, if that's what you want." The answer of this son of Mars was that of a sensible man. "My dear fellow," said he, "you are the best boy I have seen since I crossed the Channel from Ireland. I'll do neither one nor the other with you; but, give me your hand, and long may *you* live to do *all*."

Although I can recollect Jerry Hawkins in his best days—in those of his grey stallion—I have no reason to think he was ever what is termed a hard rider; but, no doubt, from his knowledge of the country and of hunting, he could generally give a good account of a run. Time and the elements of course made their impression on him; and, no doubt, he became slow; but the passion for hunting held the same power over him still, and when I was in his country, fourteen years ago, he was almost the only man at the cover's side, on a tremendously wet day, who had not a great coat. His favourite old hunter, who, with himself, was so conspicuous on the Gloucestershire beer jugs,† was in his twenty-fourth year—

* Jerry's soft manner of pronouncing a certain word.

† I have reason to believe that the original picture is at Berkeley Castle. The likeness is admirable even on the jugs, but when Jerry first saw it he exclaimed against the artist, saying, he had made his old horse appear frightened by hounds, which he was sure he had not been for the last dozen years.

Lord Segrave having annually given him a summer's run in his own park ; but, at the commencement of that season, a new horse was presented to him by the club, as a mark of their esteem of a good old sportsman and a worthy man. As a lover of fox-hunting Jerry Hawkins may have his equal, but his superior in that respect is yet to be born ; and I hope, as Otway, the poet, says—

“ I yet may see the old man in a morning,
Lusty as health, come ruddy to the field,
And there pursue the chase.”

For, despite of his offence against *costume*, to use a painter's phrase, and his being the cause of my being once in my life seen in a disgraceful state of intoxication upon a race course,* I honour Jerry not only as a sportsman, but as a true sample of that highly respectable, naturally independent, once wealthy body of men called yeomen, of whom England has long been so proud ; perhaps, because no other country but herself possesses them : “ England's *peculiar* and appropriate sons,” as Scott so correctly terms them. There is also a sort of ludicrous *naïveté* about him, which is not only most amusing, but also conveys the impression that much goodness of heart, if not fine feeling, is concealed within a rough exterior. It may be also observed, that the decline of life is too generally accompanied by the gradual decay of those generous feelings which adorn our nature and which alone render it worthy of man. But this was not the case here. Jerry Hawkins was the same kindly-hearted, hospitable, jolly fellow, he ever was at any period of his life ; and I much regret that he never ventured to take unto himself a wife, by whose beneficent aid the breed might have been perpetuated, and then there could not be a chance of the earths at the Haw being drawn over without a drag, or, what would be worse, could Jerry hear of it in the realms above, *being stunk out*.†

From a sportsman to a tailor is a great jump, but if the tailor happen to be a sportsman the drop is much reduced. A few years since—and for anything I know to the contrary he may now be going—there was a most extraordinary member of the shop-board in Cheltenham, by the name of Hastings, whose passion for the chase led him to follow hounds over a country in a manner and to a degree that would stagger belief, were not his performances as notorious as the sun at noon day. He has been in the habit of constantly starting on foot, from the kennel, with Lord Segrave's hounds, quite regardless of distance to cover ; but what is still more extraordinary, from his fine wind and speed, as well as perfect

* A few of my brother sportsmen will recollect this circumstance. In those days the races were after dinner, and the ordinaries were well attended. Jerry Hawkins was vice-president, and after the steward quitted the chair he placed himself in it, when an hour's very sharp fire of red hot port was the result.

† See Beckford's plan of destroying unnecessary earths.

knowledge of the country, *and the line foxes take*, he has never been known to be many minutes in making his appearance *at the conclusions of the best runs*. He has been known to hunt five days a week on foot with Lord Segrave, and meet the Duke of Beaufort's hounds on the sixth. On one occasion he walked from Cheltenham to Berkeley (twenty-six miles), and found the hounds gone to Haywood, ten miles further. He was rather late, but saw a good run nevertheless !—Of course he was much patronized by Lord Segrave, who I have been told payed for his hunting gear—a fustian jacket and trousers—but his lordship and all other sportsmen must lament that a man with so intuitive a knowledge of hunting, added to an enthusiastic love of the sport, should have ever been put upon a tailor's shop-board. It appeared, however, that he was still the tailor on horseback, having an almost natural antipathy to the saddle, which perhaps prevented his entering into the service of hounds ; but if it be all true which is related of his exploits on foot, and it be also true that it requires nine tailors to make a man, I can only say, I should like to be the man that nine such tailors as Hastings would make. I understand Lord Segrave more than once offered him a good situation as earth stopper, but his answer always was, that he “ could not stop earths o' nights and hunt o' days too.” In the summer months he worked hard at his trade. What a strange animal is man : and what a noble sport is fox-hunting !

The two Captains Berkeley—the first (Royal Navy) known among his friends as Fred. Berkeley, and the other as Augustus (a Dragoon)—may be said to be *nemini secundi* over a rough, bruising country. As for the sailor, he was for several years in Leicestershire certainly *nemini secundus* ; and by his desperate performance with hounds obtained the honourable appellation of “ The Devil.” Augustus is a rare-plucked one, as his father was before him, and I know few men whom I would back against him, if well mounted, over a very coarse country.

The first time I saw Mr. Grantley Berkeley as a master was with his stag-hounds, at Maidenhead Thicket, on the 3rd of December, 1826, when he hunted his hounds himself, whipped into by his brother, the Honourable Mr. Moreton Berkeley, and a servant ; the late Mr. Henry Wombwell, brother to the baronet of that name, having a short time before resigned that post. I lamented his having done this, inasmuch as there would have been something new to me in seeing two amateur gentlemen whips on one day, and especially so, had their orders from their huntsman to turn hounds, ride to points, or what not, been given, as I believe they now and then were, much after the same fashion of the “ Squire's ” to Jack Stephens, when things went wrong.

Perhaps few men in England can be produced who have shown a greater love for hounds and hunting than the gentleman of whom I now write, and I think I

can prove what I assert. So early as his seventeenth year, he whipped-in to his brother, Mr. Moreton Berkeley, who had a pack of harriers, which by way of perfecting his education—in one science at least—he took with him to Oxford, when he became a member of Corpus College. Mr. Moreton Berkeley afterwards set up stag-hounds at Cranford, when his brother Grantley whipped-in to him, thus reversing matters as to station. I have reason to believe the latter gentleman was only in his twenty-fourth year when he became a master of what were called the Berkeley stag-hounds, to which, as I have already said, his brother Moreton and Mr. H. Wombwell whipped-in. He kept them from the year 1824 to 1829, with a small subscription, and then took Bedfordshire (the Oakley country) vacated by the Duke of Bedford (then Marquis of Tavistock) from indisposition.

Mr. Grantley Berkeley appears to have had little trouble in metamorphosing his stag-hounds into fox-hounds, as the eighteen or twenty couples he took with him from Cranford were all of Lord Segrave's blood ; and he had much credit given him for having strengthened his kennel to the amount of seventy-five couples and upwards, with the exception of a draft of three or four couples of old ones, with *unentered* hounds. He hunted the Oakley country five seasons, during the four last of which, as I was assured, when on a visit to it two years ago, he showed some of the finest sport ever seen in that country in its best days. Indeed I was told, that more good runs were shown by Mr. Grantley Berkeley in the last two seasons (the last was the best) than had previously been afforded in four. For example, what a finish was this ! He found seventeen foxes in those large woodlands, Yardley Chase, &c. neutral between the Oakley and the Grafton hunts, and killed thirteen !

I have much pleasure in mentioning this circumstance, inasmuch as I wish to disabuse the minds of those of my readers who would fain persuade themselves that there is no science in stag-hunting, save the act of slotting a deer. Here we have a huntsman in the person of Mr. Grantley Berkeley, bred a stag-hunter, distinguishing himself, as no doubt he did, as a fox-hunter, and that in not the best of countries for the display of the huntsman's art.

When we look at the present generation of the Berkeley Castle family, we must allow them to be of a thorough hunting sort. There is the first-born with his fox-hounds, which he has kept in a princely style upwards of thirty years. Who could beat the two next brothers, the Captain of the Thunderer and the Honourable Augustus, over a country. The one not to be stopped by a house on fire, as John Ward used to say : the other with perhaps the best hunting hand on his horse of any man of his day, and the proof of it has been in his getting to hounds on any thing with four legs and well bred. There is the Honourable Moreton, first

a master then a whip. The Honourable Grantley, first a whip then a master—lastly, master and huntsman. Then Mr. Moreton Berkeley even followed his brother into Bedfordshire, and performed the part of amateur whip in that country, assisted by George Carter, afterwards huntsman to the Duke of Grafton. And to sum up all—the subject of these remarks was in part a master of hounds for the space of eighteen seasons, eleven of which he himself was sole master, and hunted them himself. Those with which he hunted the Oakley country were sold by him to Mr. Wilkins when he took Northamptonshire, but for what sum I never heard.

Mr. Grantley Berkeley was always capitally mounted on horses well up to his weight—good 14st. in his saddle, and purchased chiefly, if I do not mistake, from the Elmore stables. His famous grey mare Giantess, I much admired, as also Brutus, which he rode for several seasons, and spoken of by Colonel Standen to me, as one of the best hunters he ever saw in the field. If my memory do not deceive me, he died after a tremendous run with a stag. The leaping of this horse was extraordinary under so great a weight. He carried his owner over the river Brent—I should think, very rarely, if ever leaped by a horse—and what is yet more surprising, over the deer fences on the slopes in Windsor Park, just under the Castle, at the end of a very sharp burst of thirty-five minutes ! He had another very clever hunter also from Mr. Elmore's stables, called Jack-o'-Lantern, and with this horse he got over an extraordinary fence, though with a fall—the great sunken fence at Dawley Wall.

Mr. Grantley Berkeley, although no longer a master of fox-hounds, continues to do honour to the good cause by his pen, having written in the *New Sporting Magazine* some of the best practical directions for the management and well-doing of hounds, in and out of kennel, that have appeared since Mr. Beckford's days. Moreover, as I ventured to tell him, the principles he advocates in the general treatment of hounds, do honour to his feelings as a man, as well as to his judgment as a sportsman. He appears to have studied the nature and character of the dog with the best effect, and to have given him credit for the various good qualities which he possesses. And in one more respect has this gentleman honoured the noble science. Were any one to whom he is a stranger to see Mr. Grantley Berkeley, highly dressed as he always is in the evening, he might take him for what is called "a regular London man"—a member of Almack's of course, and afraid to wet his feet. Such a stranger then might be surprised to hear, that this highly dressed gentleman has not only whipped-in to, and hunted hounds for the best part of his life ; but that he constantly employs himself in the country in the laborious pursuits of shooting, fishing, and watching poachers by night, and taking them when opportunity offers ; and at other times, in the use of the gloves, the

foils, or single-stick—in fact, in every thing that tends to harden the frame, and preserve it in condition to resume the pleasures of the chase.

The mention of the Berkeleys reminds me of their friend Johnny Bushe, as he was called. Mr. Bushe was a dashing rider as well as a first-rate horseman, and equal to make his way over any country. I had the pleasure of seeing him some years back on his road to Paris, and for the sake of his horses, was sorry to find him much increased in weight.

There are two gentlemen by the name of Bailey who deserve notice. One a Duke of Beaufort's man, and the other, for two seasons, one of the *élite* at Melton, and who was bold enough to match a horse in his stud against the famous Clinker, for 200 guineas a side, p. p. In consequence of Clinker's meeting with an accident, however, the match was never run, but Mr. Bailey refused the forfeit, saying his only object was *the honour of beating the renowned Clinker*. Mr. Bailey took his leave of Leicestershire after the second season, to the regret of his brother sportsmen, and was afterwards a leading character in Mr. Power's hunt, in his native country, Ireland. The other Mr. Bailey (or Bayley) and myself have travelled many a good mile together with hounds, and few riders in the Duke's hunt are nearer to them than he is, when they go their best pace.

It is a long time since I saw Parson Bennett, as he was called in Leicestershire, in the field, and I believe he has long since given up hunting, residing in the neighbourhood of Reading, which must be a sickener to a man who lived so many years in Leicestershire as he did. I considered him a horseman, well mounted and appointed, with a good eye to his work. He was a good man at a brook.

Cheshire has always been fruitful in good horsemen. Amongst them were Sir Richard Brook and his brother, the Colonel, both leading men in the Cheshire Hunt. Mr. Buck, a Devonshire gentleman—a crack man at home, and considered good in many other countries. Ditto, Mr. George Butler, one of the H. H. (Mr. Villebois'), but was five seasons at Melton—a very good sportsman, and rode well to hounds. I used to like to see him out in Hampshire, as he did the thing like a workman, in a quiet, unpretending manner. But among these aristocratic names, I must not overlook two good men in humbler life; namely, Bill Barke, formerly landlord of the White Lion, Stratford-on-Avon, where our Warwickshire Club was held; and Jack Bamford, as he is called, a respectable yeoman in the Atherstone country. Mr. Barke though among the welters, was always a good man for his weight, but Mr. Bamford was still better. In short, few men in his own country could ride far before *him*, and he was always well-mounted. He resided at Bromcote, near Tamworth, and was well known to every sportsman within fifty miles of that place. But speaking of Atherstone I must not forget

Billy Breton and his old Snap mare. In Lord Vernon and Mr. Adderley's time he resided at Oldbury, the seat of Mr. Okeover, of coaching fame, and was rather a leading character in the country ; but as a horseman he was only conspicuous on "the old Snap mare," and he certainly shone upon her. Billy, however, had an advantage over us all. He always rode his chase again after dinner, when the old mare, or Bilbury (a good little horse of his), went still better than in the morning ; and a hint now and then was dropped that Sam Lawley and himself killed the fox.

I think I once quoted some person's opinion, that no man is fit to ride a good run over our strongly-fenced countries, unless he be as sound as a game-cock when placed on the sod to fight. This we must admit the truth of ; but in the course of my observations on horsemanship I shall bring several exceptions to this rule and produce men who have ridden, and who do ride, well to hounds, when deprived of the use of a limb. Jones, Meynell's cork-legged whipper-in, was before my time, but I have been informed he was always in his place, and I shall have to speak of one gentleman having lost a leg whom I have seen going gallantly. No less than three one-armed gentlemen (what a compliment to fox-hunting !) have I seen going better than hundreds who have two, and I think I knew one (now dead) who would have tried to go without an arm at all. It is well known among sportsmen that Sir Edward Baker, of Ranston Hall, in Dorsetshire, has been all but deprived of the use of one of his arms by an accident, and yet Sir Edward is a first flight man in his own country, and maintains a good place in Leicestershire, where he is always to be found after Christmas. The last time I was in Dorsetshire, he mounted me on a delightful young horse, which he purchased (I think) of John Fryatt of Melton, and he appeared just the sort to suit him, being very steady and very fast.

Bill, or "Squire Bean," as he used to be called in the days of his prosperity, when a horse-dealer in London, kept a few hounds for the purpose of running drag at Neasdon, he is a capital hand across country, and an excellent steeple-chase rider, but not having hunted much in the neighbourhood of London I have had but few opportunities of witnessing his performances.

The renowned Will. Barrow, many years huntsman to the equally renowned Mr. Corbet, who so long hunted Warwickshire, claims a high rank in the annals of British horsemanship. But he had a right to high pretensions. He was educated by the late Mr. Childe, of Kinlet—himself great in the art—and the pupil did credit to the preceptor. This man in his saddle was a gentleman. All who remember his style of riding to hounds will admit that the hand of man could not perform its office more to the satisfaction of a horse than Barrow's did to his ; and how straight did he put his head ! His seat was perfect, and yet he

had natural difficulties to contend with, for he was a short-legged man. But he sat well down on his fork, with his knees at the proper angle, and there was an ease, aye, a gracefulness in his position that is seldom witnessed in his superiors. As to his bridle-hand, I repeat—and I dwell on the recollection of it with pleasure—it was perfection. Neither had Ajax himself better nerve. In short, he would be with his hounds : and, ill-tempered as he was, he appeared always pleased *then*. When “ his lasses,” as he called the bitch pack, were at work, with a high scent, and his fox likely to die, nothing in the shape of a fence that there was a chance of a horse getting either over, or through, would have turned him from their line, and at cramped places he was capital. But his horses, thanks to himself in great part, were as clever as he himself was ; they would all leap standing when called upon ; and to those who know how stiffly great part of Warwickshire is fenced, it is enough to add in corroboration of what I have asserted of his horses and himself, that he did not get two falls in a season, hunting five days in the week. His three chesnuts were splendid horses for that country, equal to twice his weight ; his roaring grey horse, a flyer ; and his black Joe Andrews gelding as stout as steel itself. One of his chesnuts—perhaps the most brilliant of them, by King Fergus—would have killed him if he had thrown him to the ground ; but Will. took good care he did not, and I always considered he was his favourite. I ought, however, to mention, that his first master, Mr. Childe, said, “ Barrow was the only servant he ever had or knew, fit to trust with his own horses’ mouths (that is, the horses he himself rode), having so gentle and good a hand on his bridle.” These are not my own words, but extracted from a letter to me from an old friend of Barrow’s late master, and a higher compliment could not have been paid to him as a horseman.

I cannot recollect ever having seen Captain Baird in Leicestershire, although I conclude I must have done so, and I was just too late to meet him in Yorkshire. I find my chance is now gone by, as I hear he has retired from the field ; but in all countries in which I have heard mention made of his name, the greatest credit has been given to him for his riding. Mr. Lambton, with whose hounds he hunted three seasons, spoke of him in the highest terms, adding to the general eulogium the compliment that he never knew so hard a rider do so little mischief. In the famous Owthorpe run with the Quorn (December, 1825), Captain Baird greatly distinguished himself, although his horse failed just at the finish. But it was “ a terrible burst,” of an hour and fifteen minutes, seen, throughout, by only a chosen few ! I have seen Mr. De Burgh ride very hard, and, I believe, he has the character of always being in a good place. Of Sir James Boswell I need not say much ; he is well known at Melton as one of the *élite*, and when I was last there had a very good stud.

CHAPTER V



CANNOT do better on entering the third letter of the alphabet than commence with the late Duke of Cleveland, as a sportsman of great notoriety, and a horseman of almost unequalled experience, having performed the character of a huntsman to hounds—which hunted for the most part of the time five days in the week—for upwards of forty years. Were it possible then to enumerate the fences he must have ridden over, the falls he must have had, and the escapes and scrambles to boot, what a volume would it

form ! Unluckily, I did not see his Grace in the field in the full vigour of his days,

“ When, first in the burst, see dashing away,
Taking all in his stroke, on Ralpho the grey.
With *persuaders* in flank, comes Darlington’s peer,
With his chin sticking out, and his cap on one ear ;” *

but I saw him riding as fast and as straight as any man need do to see hounds in their work, in an enclosed country like his, and this at a period of life when few men can ride at all. Moreover I saw him take a few fences of that awkward description, particularly one V stile, that would have stopped a large majority of young men who attempt riding to hounds.

* In the well-known print of “ Lord Darlington and his Hounds,” his Lordship’s cap is placed as here described. The song from which these lines are taken was made on a famous run with the Duke of Cleveland’s hounds, when he hunted the Badsworth country, and called, “ The Hounds of Old Raby for me.” It thus neatly and classically commences :—

“ Whilst passing o’er Barnsdale I happened to spy
A fox stealing on, and the hounds in full cry ;
They are Darlington’s sure, for his voice I well know,
Crying, ‘ Forward !—hark forward ! ’ from Shelbrook below.”

The style of the Duke of Cleveland's riding was more adapted to a close than a flying country ; but it was a very safe one among the grips and blind ditches with which all plough countries abound. He held his horses very fast by their heads, and made them all the best creepers I ever saw in any one man's stable. I saw him one day walk his favourite grey horse, Panegyric, into a very rough fence, on the other side of which was a deep and *particularly blind* ditch, in a manner that exhibited great temper in the horse as well as a good hand in the rider, and without which I thought a fall could not have been avoided ; for, until the fence was beaten down, neither horse nor man could see the trap that was laid for them.* It is somewhat remarkable that what is called a fine mouth in a horse, which nine tenths of the riding men like, was to the Duke of Cleveland an objection. His Grace, however, always rode great and well-bred horses, more than equal to his weight.

Few men have done more honour to fox-hunting than the late Duke of Cleveland did, and through a long course of years. His having gone through the laborious task of hunting his hounds throughout so many seasons—nearer forty than thirty I should say—at once proves that his passion for the sport was really in-born : and to his duties in the field he also added those of the kennel, always feeding his hounds himself, and in a truly workmanlike manner. Then another proof can be adduced of the duke's love of fox-hunting, and likewise of his wish that others should profit by his experience. Let the day's sport have been what it might, a detail of it was written by his own hand ere he went to his bed ; and the "operations of the Raby pack" were published in a volume at the end of every season.

The manners and deportment of the Duke of Cleveland were such as are just suited to a master of hounds, and he was so extremely popular with the farmers—as indeed with all his field—that his country swarmed with foxes. Of his zeal in the pursuit of them, I will only repeat the following anecdote from my Yorkshire Tour. Previously to my visit to his Grace, I was staying with Sir Bellingham Graham, at Norton Conyers, and at three o'clock in the evening of a hard day, and in the last week of November too, and when the greater part of the field had retired, Sir Bellingham thus addressed the Duke, at that time Lord Darlington. "Well, my Lord, I think it is time to go home, and your road is mine." "*My road,*" said the Duke, "*is through that wood,*" pointing to Heslet Wood, two miles in a contrary direction. To Heslet Wood we went, found a capital fox, had a beautiful burst of twenty-four minutes, and then hunted him into Snape Park, where the hounds were stopped at the end of one hour and twenty minutes, the last hour in the dark. "We want the lamps lit," said I to his Grace,

* Sir Bellingham Graham will recollect this—I mean the blind ditch.

as he was cramming his horse at a fence, without knowing on which side the ditch was, or seeing a white gate, which I espied close to us. "I think we do," replied his Grace, but he disdained quitting his line for the gate, and succeeded in getting over the fence, with a long drop into a turnpike road.

The Raby kennel was, until the two last seasons of their being kept, always strong in hounds, divided into a large and small pack. The former had the character of being a little slack in their work, about the period of my hunting with them, but I am ready to admit that I saw nothing to induce me to think them so. Their large size would naturally make them appear to disadvantage, in comparison with the other pack, as far as the point in question is concerned ; and if we may judge from the very small price the Duke of Cleveland's hounds fetched, when he gave them up, when it may be imagined, from the short state of the kennel very large drafts must have been made, that there was truth in the charge of slackness, increased perhaps in after years, as the noble owner of them himself became slacker. But old age will beat us all ; and if the Duke of Cleveland became slack with his hounds, it was not until long after his medical advisers advised him to desist from following them at all. I know from undoubted authority (that of his Grace's intimate friend, Mr. Wharton), that only two years back, he was seen with the brush of a good fox in his hand, in the midst of his pack, at the end of a run of fifteen miles !

Take his Grace as a master of hounds, and an owner of race horses, he must claim to be ranked amongst the most celebrated sportsmen that England has ever seen ; and in the latter department of sporting, which, however inferior to fox-hunting, is better suited to declining years, he was as keen as ever, to the last few months of his life.

We always expect to see the well-graced actor advance in excellence towards the closing scenes of the part he is called upon to perform ; and such should be more especially the case in real life. A report got abroad, finding its way into more than one of our periodicals, and not, to my knowledge, contradicted, stating that on his Grace giving up his hounds, he had all the gorse covers on his own property, within the limits of the Raby hunt, destroyed. Had I been the Duke of Cleveland I would not have done this. I would rather have invited some good sportsman to take to the country, and follow an example—with this one exception—so very worthy of imitation, as his own indisputably was, in everything relating to the duties and operations of an English master of fox-hounds.

In private life, the Duke was conspicuous for many qualities that do honour to our nature, and such as would render it a contradiction to attribute the destruction of his covers to a *selfish* motive. Independently of his Grace having been one

of the most agreeable companions in the social hour, as indeed in all others, that I have ever come across in life, he had the character of being a most kind master to his servants, who have grown old in his service, and one of the most liberal landlords in Great Britain.

The conspicuous men in the Raby country when I was in it, were the noble owner of the pack, especially when on his celebrated grey horse, Panegyric, Sir Bellingham Graham, Messrs. Milbanke, John Monson, Claridge, Trotter, Newton, &c.

I venerate old age in the field, when it assumes the gaiety of youth, and the person of whom I am about to speak exhibited even its rashness, when past the age of man. I allude to "Old Corcoran," as he was called in Surrey, who, although very far from being the accomplished horseman that the Duke of Cleveland was, was a wonderful man over a country, taking into consideration his form and stature, by no means adapted to the saddle; his very advanced age, and the fact of his not having commenced hunting before the period when most people leave it off. But as Clarendon says of somebody whose appearance was not prepossessing, there was in this unhandsome and homely habitation (see his, Corcoran's, portrait) a mind and soul lodged (not very lovely and beautiful, and cultivated and polished by all the knowledge and wisdom that arts and sciences could supply it with, as his lordship's panegyric proceeds, but) ardently devoted to hounds, which he would be in the same field with, if possible, in chase. It would not be right that I should here repeat the many laughable anecdotes I have already produced which relate to the mishaps and disasters of this extraordinary man—his death-like falls, and his resurrections by the brandy-bottle; but I may allude once more to those acts of horsemanship, wherein he certainly displayed a very notable courage. It is told of General Washington—who, be it known, kept fox-hounds in America—that he only required *one* natural, good quality in the horse he was to ride, and he himself would produce the rest. This was—"to go along." Now old Corcoran's song in chase was not "Hark forward, hark forward, away!" but, "Go along, horse," which he always sang out, laying much stress on the last word, when he came to a large fence. It was certainly amusing, indeed I may say delightful, to behold this old man charging a high timber-fence, which those before him had turned away from, with "*Go along, horse,*" on his tongue—which tongue, by the way, was not unfrequently silenced when he arrived on the other side, and alighted, on terra firma, *on his head*. He had one extraordinary horse, however, called *The Miller*, on which he certainly got over very queer places. This curious sample of old Irish breed is now gone to his fathers, and "good luck go with him," say I.

There was a very good heavy weight * in Warwickshire, in the character of a yeoman, who, I venture to say, was a constant attendant on the Warwickshire hounds full thirty years, but who is now, I understand, defunct. His name was Cockbill. He was also a good sportsman, with an uncommonly good eye to hounds, and had generally three slapping hunters in his stable, which, heavy as he was, he for the most part made himself, as the term is. He was a very strong horseman, but by no means with an iron hand ; nevertheless I scarcely ever saw him without a martingal to his bridle—a blemish, I admit. But it was a vain attempt to endeavour to reason Cockbill out of the use of this now-esteemed slow and low appendage to the hunting saddle-room. “Don’t talk to me,” he would say, “of the danger or inconvenience of a martingal. With it, I can make my horses put their feet where I like ; without it, they often put them where they like, and then I get a tumble, *and I fall heavy*.” I appeal, however, to all Warwickshire sportsmen to back my assertion, that, welter as he was, Cockbill was always in his place, which place was a good one, and sometimes not on the best of cattle. I will also go one step further and say, that many a valuable, young, strong horse, has lost his chance of becoming a hunter by not having had this sturdy yeoman for his owner.

There are the big C’s and the little C’s, as we were once shown in the horn-book, so with your permission, Mr. Reader, we will get again among the big ones, and introduce to the notice of your readers, perhaps two of the best welters that ever were born of one woman, and that is saying much—too much, perhaps, some may say, if we take a peep into Nottinghamshire. But more of this anon. I now allude to the late Mr. Canning, of Foxcote, Warwickshire, and his brother Robert. The birth, parentage, and education of these worthy characters being so well-known to the world, it might be needless to allude to them, were it not for the purpose of stating that having been educated on the Continent they received no instructions in their youth, on the art of riding to hounds—after the manner of our University gentlemen, who so agreeably mingle the *dulce* with the *utile*, with Lord Fitzwilliam, the Gransden, or “The Duke.” Their first start, then, being in manhood, without the benefit of experience, we must attribute their prowess to that natural faculty by which Shakespeare’s lion knew the true prince, and conclude that they became sportsmen, and rode hounds *by instinct*.

We will commence with the elder brother, who was the heavier of the two, but so fervent was his zeal for the chase that he took all possible means to reduce himself ; such as walking some distance almost every non-hunting day in the

* I cannot now say the exact weight of Mr. Corcoran, but I should think little short of fifteen stone on his horse. His boots and leather breeches were no joke by themselves. The maker of the latter told me that he sent him five pairs weighing 20 lbs. in all !

winter, and often from thirty to forty miles a day in the summer, no matter how hot the weather,* and swathed with rolls of flannel. Chiefly for the purpose of lowering his weight he accompanied the last Lord Dormer but one, on a tour through the Highlands, when, although he had a carriage or a horse at command, I believe he availed himself of neither, but walked the journey throughout ; for he told me he walked upwards of sixteen hundred miles in all ! A considerable loss of flesh (if my memory serves me, two stone) was the result ; but his frame would not admit of his entering the scales under fifteen stone, and, I lament to say, loss of health was the consequence of this over-exertion ; for there is a medium in every thing, and in nothing more than in what is termed exercise after the heyday of youth is past, if not indeed in its meridian.

But to his stud. It generally consisted of five hunters, never exceeding six, and his success with them was extraordinary. It is true his stables were the best I ever saw, and his horses had not only every indulgence and comfort in them, but very fair play in the field—for who ever saw him take an unnecessary liberty with them or abuse them ? On the contrary, who that knew and hunted with him has not witnessed the indulgence he gave them, by walking by their side many a long and dirty mile, on returning after a severe run ? Indeed, I remember his carrying this amiable feeling so far as to say, he should build a stable in a village two miles from his house, that his hunter might not be put to the exertion of ascending a long and steep hill at the end of a fagging day ; and if Warwickshire had remained what Warwickshire then was, he would no doubt have done so. But in chase Mr. Canning was almost invariably in a good place, and considering he laboured under the disadvantage of short-sightedness, in addition to his immense weight, it was delightful to see him generally so near hounds. His style of horse was, with few exceptions, coarse : large heads, large hips, large every thing ; but handsome is that handsome does on these occasions, and he was very fortunate in getting hold of some which greatly belied their appearance, by the pace they could carry themselves along with such a welter weight on their backs. But Mr. Canning had a fine bridle-hand, and amidst the hundreds of days on which I hunted with him I could name but very few on which either himself or his horse was defeated. In the Epwell run, perhaps one of the finest ever seen in his country—twenty miles on end—he greatly distinguished himself on a horse much under his weight, and only five years old, for which he was much lauded in the poem that memorable day gave birth to. This horse, *The General*, became afterwards my property, I having purchased him from Sir John Dashwood King at a hundred

* On one excessively hot day in July he walked thirty-five miles to my house swathed in flannel. What a Hercules must he have been ! But few constitutions will stand such liberties.

and sixty guineas, and dropping into a brilliant run the first time I rode him, I transferred him to the Earl of Warwick at sixty guineas premium.

As our estimate of good and evil is said to lie chiefly in comparison, so does that of the actions and accomplishments of man. Great, then, as was the elder Mr. Canning as a rider to hounds, he could not be compared with his younger brother, who, I have reason to believe, taking every thing into our consideration, and combining the sportsman with the horseman, has scarcely, if ever, been excelled. Then what is this "every thing" that is to be considered? Why, in the first place, Mr. Robert Canning stood six feet four inches without his shoes. Secondly, his weight with his saddle was never under seventeen stone. Thirdly, I never saw him with a second horse in the field. Fourthly, although he rode a very superior sort of horse to his brother, and certainly had some splendid ones in his stud, he did not pay that attention to their condition which his style of riding demanded. But, lastly, where is the man who can say that, whether over the Leicestershire-like grass-grounds of Long Itchington, over the deep-ploughed vale of Wellesburne, up the heart-breaking hills of Epwell, or over far-famed Leicestershire itself, when he visited it, Mr. Robert Canning did not distinguish himself with hounds? But, indeed, how could it be otherwise, so long as his horse could carry him? His eye to a country is perfect; and neither hedge, ditch, gate, stile, brook, nor river—flooded* or not flooded—would stop him, and the places he used to bore through were astounding.

Although professedly writing at present on riding, yet when speaking of so eminent a performer in the art, and also in honour of horse-flesh, I may perhaps be permitted to allude to two individual hunters in this gentleman's stud. One was a chesnut-gelding called Favourite—par excellence, of course—apparently at least two stone under his weight, but who carried him brilliantly for several successive years; the other, a stallion called Knowsley, purchased of Mr. Boycott, equally below his weight, deficient in his fetlocks, and having altogether the appearance of a fourteen stone man's horse at the utmost. But these were the horses, with a few others, on which this crack rider chiefly distinguished himself, and on Knowsley particularly so, in a splitter over Leicestershire, which I need not further allude to here. My object, however, is to state, that in conversing once with my old friend on the merits of these phenomena, he let me into a secret about horses to carry weight. "Narrow horses," said he, "like Favourite, provided they are like him, *deep*, can carry me; but it matters not how thick a horse

* He has been more than once seen to leap a good brook when flooded—his horse rising at it *out of the overflow*, the severest test of hand. What Warwickshire sportsman can forget his "*Come up!*" to his horse on these occasions?

may be, if he have not depth of *brisket*, commonly called of *girth*." Knowsley, I must observe, was a fine-constituted horse, with admirable temper, and of course full of hard meat ; and I used to say, that, had I the choice of England, he should be the hunter I would select. He was the sire of many good horses, most of them taking after him in temper and great capability of fencing. I myself gave 200 guineas for a four-year-old colt got by him, which made a superior hunter ; indeed, he was in appearance nearly a fac-simile of the old horse.

Independently of their horsemanship there was one faculty these brothers displayed which I never saw equalled, and this was—the power of describing a run, and, I was going to say, every field into which the chase led—combined with a knowledge of countries they had once ridden over, quite unprecedented in my experience of sportsmen. Whenever a good travelling fox led us into distant parts, quite out of our knowledge, and far away from high roads, the Cannings were the pilots to whom we looked. "Let me see," one or the other of them would say ; "yonder is such a point, and yonder is another : our line must be between them, so come along." *I never knew them wrong.*

There was a very good man some thirty years ago by the name of Cooke,* in Gloucestershire ; but one of the fastest England ever saw is Mr. William Coke, nephew to Mr. Coke of Holkham, better known in Leicestershire as Billy Coke. The song says, "Coke on the pony, has scarce got a crony," † in allusion to a small but extraordinary horse which he rode some seasons, and on which no man could beat him if he got any thing like a start. He had also another clipper, called Advance, so dangerous in a crowd with his heels, that when he rode him he always had a bit of paper sewed to the hinder part of his coat with the word "beware" written upon it—an excellent precaution too, and one that should always be taken with horses addicted to the vice of kicking. Think of a sportsman with a large stud at Melton, as was Mr. Maxse's case, being laid up nearly half the season by a kick from a horse of this description ! What recompense can be made for it ?

It amuses me when I recollect that Mr. Coke, in defiance of all opinion, and almost to the extinction of good keeping in those days, persevered in wearing leather breeches in the field, when no Melton man would have taken a hundred pounds to have been seen in them—the said leathers being considered the unerring mark of a slow one. Indeed, how well do I remember Sir Bellingham Graham telling George Fitzherbert at Shrewsbury, that he should have wished his two friends (strangers in the country) to have accompanied him to his house to dinner ; "but,"

* Mr. Henry Cooke, of Stroudwater.

† In Mr. Holyoake's picture of "*Hounds going up wind best pace*," Mr. Coke on the pony is conspicuous.

added the Baronet emphatically, "I could not stand that slow-looking fellow in the leathers," one of them being so clad. Now mark the change in the space of four years, and how that change was effected. Every man in Cheshire has hunted in leathers for the last hundred years, by reason of the only man who could make them fit for a gentleman to wear having been born in the good town of Tarporley, in that county Palatine. Lord Wilton, a Cheshire man, appeared at Brooksby Gate, the first day of the Leicestershire season of 1829, in leathers ; and from that day to this, every man *not in leathers* is considered dead slow. So much for fashion ; but, as a poet sings,

" Our dress, still varying, nor to forms confin'd,
Shifts like the sands, the sport of every wind."

I can only allude to the late very celebrated Mr. Childe of Kinlet, as a sportsman, as I should to some classic writer who has left us a model for our pen, he having quitted Leicestershire before my time. I should like to have had it in my power to say I had seen the man who is said—and I believe said truly—to have first introduced the present dashing method of riding to hounds, to the destruction of the "look before you leap" system so prudently pursued by our forefathers, which method, although *not* essential to the character of a sportsman, is indicative of that noble courage which Englishmen never fail to exhibit on all other occasions. That the old system will never return until the grass shall grow in Melton streets is quite certain, but that hounds suffer from the other extreme—the new style—is equally a truism, and Mr. Meynell himself foretold the evil. "I have done nothing but admire your horse to-day, Childe," said he to his dear friend after a quick thing ; "*he has beaten every hound* in my pack, but *one*." As the story goes the rebuke went for nothing, for Childe is *reported* to have answered, he should ride his grey horse on the morrow who could go half as fast again as the one he was then on. Here is no doubt an exaggeration, perhaps for the sake of the joke, for Childe understood hunting, although on the day in question he had certainly over-ridden the hounds, and brought them once to check.

I remember two good men over a country of the name of Campbell—one known as Mr. Hugh Campbell, and the other, Mr. Campbell of Saddle. The first was many years a leading man in Warwickshire, in Lord Middleton's time, and the other spent several seasons at Melton, where he was not only a bruising rider, such as few could beat, but a delightful companion over the mahogany, one of the best-tempered men on earth, and a poet. What more would you have ? To hear Tommy Strickland speak of him, his equal must be rarely met with on earth, but when his name is mentioned every man joins in the tunable din, "*Johnny*

Campbell is a good one." Sir Vincent Cotton has long taken his leave of Leicestershire, but in the days of Creeper, Cheat, and his famous mare Lark, few men rode harder than he did, or was much better mounted.

The Croxalls, father and son, were in repute in the Atherstone country many years back. The old gentleman held on to the very last, seldom missing a day ; and his son, Ned Croxall as he was called, was a neat horseman, and at one time reckoned rather a crack one. They were both good friends to fox-hunting. There was also a very good heavy weight in Gloucestershire who should not be overlooked. I mean Mr. Sackville Creswell. He was more *au fait* at the walls of his native hills than most men I have seen in the field, getting over them in a manner almost peculiarly his own. He absolutely made his horse demolish them under his feet, when time admitted of it.

The Codringtons, Messrs. John and Robert, were good men over a country, and fond of every thing in the shape of hunting. From all I have seen and heard of them they would go as long as their horses could, and turn from nothing practicable, and what more need be said ? I call Mr. John Codrington a very superior horseman. The Squire, the master of the hounds, was among the "slow and sure" ones—too heavy to be quick in his country, but generally thereabouts, as the term is. He was a rare good sportsman, and an excellent judge of hounds. Mr. Harvey Combe was a hard and good rider, speaking from experience of his performance when I was with his hounds in the Vale of White Horse (no easy country to get across), and also from what I have heard of him from others.

There was a capital workman in the shape of a servant in Dorsetshire by the name of *Channing*, late huntsman to Mr. Yeatman, and afterwards to Lord Portman. There was a deal of the *ex re natâ* about that man. He was quite self-taught, having turned out a horseman at once, and from all I saw of him I know no person whom I should prefer to make a young horse into a hunter for me. He had good temper, fine hand, and plenty of nerve. He was riding a delightful snaffle-bridle horse of his own making, which he purchased for £20, but very cheap at £130 added to it. So much for a provincial. But hold hard ! Cannot I find another among the out-siders in the C's ? Yes ; Carter, Sir Tatton Syke's huntsman, who, on his Whitelock mare, and the other thorough-bred ones—and of course in Sir Tatton's service he rode nothing else—went brilliantly to his hounds. Carter's appearance on his horse I considered quite the thing—nearly equal to Dick Burton. Jack Chapple, whipper-in to the Badsworth, a great artist, and Sir Bellingham Graham, who was his first master, said he was the best servant-rider he ever had.

Talking of provincials, who can find a better—there may be a faster—horse-

man than Mr. John Crew, who once had the Shropshire hounds? He was at one time allowed to be the best man in that country, but I have not lately met him in the field. Of Mr. Claggett I have not seen much, having hunted but little on his beat. He has always been allowed to be a splendid horseman, often riding away from a whole field, as he did once to my knowledge with Mr. Jolliffe's hounds, in a terrible burst of forty minutes from Horse Hills.

I never saw the Marquis of Clanricarde with hounds but twice, and then we did nothing; but I have read of his signalizing himself one day some years back with the Puckeridge pack, when much praise was bestowed upon him, not only for riding well, but for not riding at ticklish points of a very tremendous run, which was the death of three horses and a good Rooding's fox. His lordship had a change, and went to the end with a chosen few of the right sort. His performance on Moonraker is well known and duly appreciated.

There was a very good yeoman in Leicestershire, by the name of Clarke, who distinguished himself a few years back (in January, 1828, I believe), in a splendid run of eighteen miles from point to point, with the Quorn hounds, but embracing a vast extent of surrounding country, and performed in the almost incredible short space of two hours and a quarter; only twelve horsemen being up at the finish, among whom was Mr. Clarke. But speaking of yeomen, what can I say of Dick Christian after all that has been said, read, heard, and seen of him already? His performance on Mr. Maxse's King of the Valley, in the Grand Leicestershire steeplechase, has been so long before the public, both in letter-press and on canvas, that I shall not allude to that further than by saying, that it was the climax of every thing connected with what we may call hunting horsemanship. In fact, raw and inexperienced as his horse was, he would have won the race had he chanced to have met with a practicable part of the Billesden Brook, where,—and, reader, never forget it—the space he cleared was ten yards and one foot, but he fell! Measure it in your drawing-room if it be large enough, otherwise on your grass-plot, and then frame to yourself the picture of Dick, on the King of the Valley, flying through the air over such a space, and that *just at the finish of the race!* But there are those who say that although he did not win the match, being again beaten by a fall at the last, his riding Clinker against Mr. Osbaldeston on Clasher—*five miles in sixteen minutes*—was a still more masterly performance than the other, from the very killing pace at which the horses went, and the rapidity with which the large fences were ridden over. I did not see this race; so shall only remind my readers of the answer Dick made me one day to my question, whether he had not had some bad falls in riding raw horses over the Harborough country? “Nothing particular,” said he; “though to be sure *I did once break my leg.*”

Taking a peep into the rurals, let me see how many more I can produce whose names belong to schedule C. I remember Mr. Letchmere Charlton, one of the hardest riders in England, and a very good one too. He had a season or two in Leicestershire, where he was generally in a good place. He made the race horse Shacabac into a hunter in that country, and he was afterwards ridden by Mr. Assheton Smith several seasons, proving first-rate. Mr. Francis Charlton has confined himself to the midland countries, but he has always been considered very good in Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, and in his own county, Worcester. In fact, he was a superior horseman, as regards hand and seat, and had good taste in horse-flesh. Mr. Compton, of the Manor-house, New Forest, had a house at Quorn, in Mr. Assheton Smith's time, and left a good name behind him as a sportsman and a gentleman. His offering Mr. Edge fifty pounds for the ride of one of his horses with *one fox only*, from some favourite cover in Leicestershire, is one proof; and his accompanying "the Squire" (Osbaldeston) on foot to Ascot races from Eton, between school hours, just to see one race, is another of that zeal which is a chief ingredient in a sportsman. Indeed, without it he seldom rises above par.

Mr. Otway Cave went well over Leicestershire, and so did Colonel, now Sir George Cornwall (very few better), who was for several seasons a visitor at Belvoir. Perhaps he had been tutored by his uncle, the bishop, one of the neatest horsemen that ever sat in a saddle—at least, so said the late Lord Forester, and who will dispute his judgment? Lord Chesterfield is an out-and-outer when he likes his horse. When on Advance, or Pad, and two or three others, I believe it must have been a good man that could beat him. But who has been better horsed than Lord Chesterfield? Lord Clonmel has also been always well horsed for his country, Warwickshire; and although never appearing to wish to be a first-flight man in a run, where is there a dearer lover of the sport, or any man who has tried harder to be with hounds than he has?

Now then for the D's, in which no doubt we shall find many "a d—d good rider," according to an obsolete phrase. With whom then shall I begin? A man may be a good horseman without being a hard rider, as the term is, as was the case with Bayzand and some others whom I may introduce. Among the former is my old friend Sir John Dashwood (King), from whose book I have taken many a leaf. No doubt most of my readers know that Sir John was never a fox-hunter, but for thirty years the master of a pack of harriers, perhaps first in repute of any which England has produced. I always considered Sir John a first-rate horseman—his seat and hand being quite perfect for the hunting field. His eldest son, Mr. George Dashwood, a fac simile, with the enviable addition of capital nerve. Indeed it was Lord Jersey's opinion, that, when he had his black Sultan horse, and Achilles,

(each of which I sold him,) he was not to be beaten ; and by way of a clincher to that opinion, his lordship offered him four hundred guineas for the former. I have often wondered why this fine performer so soon quitted that sphere in which he shone so brilliantly. Henry Dashwood was very good ; and as for John, the younger brother (John Bull as we called him), he would have ridden through a house on fire, if there had been no other way of getting to hounds. But, poor fellow ! he pitched on his head over stiff timber, and, neglecting the lancet, paralysis followed.

Talking of elegant horsemen leads me to Mr. Davey, whom I was near calling the Adonis of horsemen. It is quite certain, however, that Davey was a perfect master of the art of horsemanship, and, had he been obliged to have worked for his bread, would have made a second Ducrow ; for there are few positions into which he has not thrown himself, on the saddle. On a hunter he has always signalized himself, and on what is called “ a horse likely to make a hunter,” few men—not even hunter-making Harry *—have gone half so well as he has gone. Indeed, I heard a very good judge of these matters say, that Davey’s hand was so fine that he should be afraid of riding a horse that he had ridden two seasons. “ If,” said he, “ I did not give him ‘ *the office*,’ at all kinds of fences, as he had done before, he might give me an awful fall,” which I have more than once known to be the case arising from similar circumstances. It is well known that Mr. Davey’s celebrated horse, Skylark, had but half an eye, but what could beat him with his hand ? But the word “ *well*,” leads me on to another part of this gentleman’s history. Going the pace one day over Oxfordshire, he found himself not only embracing mother earth, but likely to be received into her very inmost womb, having ridden over an old *well*, the mouth of which broke in with him. The horse was engulfed, and of course never saw day-light again, and his rider had the greatest difficulty in not accompanying him *ad imos*, as one of his legs was fast between the horse and the wall of the well. This comes near to a miracle ; but I may have still more miraculous events to relate, and no one shall exclaim, “ Credat Judæus !—*non ego* ;” for I shall bring proof. The last time I saw Davey in the field was in his favourite country, Northamptonshire, when Musters had it. There was a great crowd, and I did not observe him till far on in the run. “ Were you with us at starting ?” said I. “ *Was I not ?*” said he, “ did you not see some one go first over the brook, on a young, hot, thorough-bred devil, shaking his head ready to shake it off ?” I did, and it was Davey. The brook was just under Moulton’s Gorse, and a teaser.

I saw a very good man, in every sense of the term, in Durham, the Hon. Captain,

* “ Bradsley’s boy.”

afterwards Admiral Dundas, whom poor old John Burrell, in the native simplicity of his heart, asked after "*all his friends in Yorkshire?*" but to have enumerated them *all* would have occupied some time, the said admiral being a very popular character. When I say the admiral was *all but* blown up in a ninety-gun ship, and the last man to quit her when on fire, it is needless to say he could not be daunted by a Durham ditch, and most gallantly did I see him cross that country—and particularly the famous long Newton day, which proved fatal, alas ! to his horse. He rode thorough-bred ones, and struck me as one who, like his brother admiral, Hoste,* would have distinguished himself in Leicestershire.

Going farther north, let us say a word about Captain Douglas, fixed upon to decide, not in reality who was the best rider, himself or Captain Ross, but a more difficult point still—which was the best horse of the year of our Lord, 1826 ; as all England appears to have been ransacked to produce the non-pareil. I allude to the match between Radical and Clinker, run over Leicestershire for a very large sum of money, and won by Captain Ross, on Clinker, against Captain Douglas, on Radical. The origin of the match, however, was an opinion given by his countryman, Lord Kennedy, that Captain Douglas, as a rider to hounds, was superior to Captain Ross. Now I remember once being much pleased with an observation of an ancient (Cicero, I believe), upon some man who had made a noise in the world, namely, that "he had crept into honours by the mistakes of mankind." But I must here observe, that no man acquires the name and character of a good rider to hounds unless he have given repeated proofs of the fact. There is no making the world *believe* that a man can leap hedges and ditches, five-barred gates, and wide brooks, going at the rate of twenty miles in the hour at the same time. He must be seen to do so, and that very often, before credit will be given to him for having done it. That Captain Douglas was a superior horseman there can be no doubt, having been long acknowledged as such in the Forfarshire hunt ; but I must repeat an opinion I have often given before, that—although I admit a few exceptions to the rule which I may afterwards produce—a man, to distinguish himself in Leicestershire, must have been experienced in riding over it or over those counties which are approximate to it, such as Rutlandshire, Northamptonshire, and the best part of Warwickshire, or he will find himself seven pounds a worse man on his horse than another who may be but his equal, but who has been experienced in riding over those crack countries. I must add that I never heard this opinion confuted by those who are competent to judge of it, therefore I the more pertinaciously adhere to it ; and I would recommend every man who backs his horse over Leicestershire, to have a Leicestershire jockey on his back.

* "The late Sir William Hoste, a good man over any country."

There is another Scotchman whom I have seen ride very hard to hounds. I mean Mr. Dowbiggin, whose two favourite hunters were burned in their stable, in Leicestershire, a few years ago, and who also met with an extraordinary accident by which another good hunter was lost. One of her hinder legs became entangled in a loose thornbush, which she unfortunately trailed after her, and kicking at it to get rid of it, she forced the point of a stub into her bowels, which caused her death in the course of a few hours. I have seen Mr. Dowbiggin exhibit rare nerve at fences, but his forte is creeping over awkward places, at which he appeared to me to excel.

The Drakes were all very accomplished horsemen in the field. The elder brother, the master of the hounds, was always in a good place and well mounted ; and most particularly distinguished himself, it appears, in the famous Shugborough day, when, as a correspondent writes to me, he was " master, huntsman, and whip," during great part of the run, and over a terribly severe country, as I well know. As for Mr. John Drake, his style of riding was quite first-rate, with this enviable distinction ; he went faster over a country, *without appearing to be in a hurry*, than any other man I can at this moment name. In short, he always reminded me of the climax in the old huntsman's description of a run—" the hounds," said he, " went like h—ll and d——n, and *the old mare carried me like oil.*" I have seen the late Captain Drake go very well, and I remember his excellent performance some years since, on one of Deakins's horses, in *a most severe* hour and fifty minutes from Lord Chesterfield's (then) new cover, killing in Leighton Buzzard field.

In the song of " The hounds of old Raby for me," which I picked up on my Yorkshire tour, is the following stanza :—

" On Ebony mounted, behold my Lord Barnard
To live near the pack now obliged is to strain hard :
But mounting friend Barnay on something that's quick,
I warrant, my lads, he would show you a trick."

By this it appears his lordship was on a slow one, and, as Dick Foster says, "*I hate a slow one.*" It is also an acknowledgment that Lord Darlington (now Duke of Cleveland) was in good repute in Yorkshire. During the many years his lordship resided at Melton, he was always considered a good sportsman, well mounted, and in a fair place, but never aspiring to be what is called a first-flight man. Lord Denbigh has always been well mounted, is a true friend to fox-hunting, but now contents himself with what he can get from his seat in Warwickshire, having long since given up going into Leicestershire.



C. DAVIS, THE ROYAL HUNTSMAN, ON HIS CELEBRATED HORSE HERMIT. *From a tinted lithograph by J. W. GILES, after a picture by R. B. DAVIS. The proof lent by Messrs. Ackermann.*

All the Delmés rode well : as the song says,

“ So severe was the pace, that Lord Gardner they tell me,
Was all the way, neck and neck, racing with Delmé.” *

I was indebted to Mr. George Delmé—as he was previously in his stable—for educating my favourite grey horse, Amesbury ; and most perfectly did he tutor him, for there was nothing he was not up to over a country. Shall I ever forget his making the top of a staff-and-bound fence the fulcrum for a second spring, to clear a second ditch which neither he nor I saw ? No ; nor the “ the Squire’s ” look back, thinking I was floored. This reminds me of a good Worcestershire yeoman, named Darke, from whom I bought a horse called Turnpike ; so called because, for a small wager, Mr. Darke leaped him over the turnpike gate on the London road out of Worcester, the uppermost bar of which was made of *iron*. I sold this horse to Mr. Mytton, and I have his letter, containing these memorable words—“ *Turnpike is the only hunter I have ever yet had !* ” This was saying too much, for though a good horse, he was short in his shoulders, a great fault.

I have never had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Dansey, who hunted Nottinghamshire, in the field, since he was a very young man ; so can only say he was well-bred to ride, and early entered to the art. Almost the only Kentish sportsman I knew was Mr. Dyke, whom I have seen going very well to hounds, on a capital bay mare he rode some few years back. But as a genius is not the growth of any particular soil, I dare say there are many good men in that county. In my own neighbourhood we had to regret the loss of a very promising performer, I mean the late Lord Dorchester, who was called for just as he had entered upon his manhood. He was a powerful horseman, and would face any thing.

I have been much pleased with the riding of Mr. Davis, huntsman to the king. He is one of the closest sitters to his saddle, over a country, that I ever came across—an incalculable advantage to his horse, for those “ wash-ball seats,” as Sir Bellingham Graham calls them, are destruction to him. His hand and eye are excellent, and, I may add, he is as game as a pebble. In consequence of a kick from a horse he was violently afflicted with *tic douloureux* for upwards of two years, but even that could not stop his going with his hounds. I do not think the Plica Polonica † would stop him, so long as life remained in him. But I am happy to say he is recovered, and, I believe, is seldom under the influence of pain. Mr. Doyne, now residing in Dublin, and Mr. Drummond, of the New Forest, were famous performers, and known as such in Leicestershire.

* Song on the Oakley Hunt.

† The most painful disease to which human nature is subject ; known only in extreme northern latitudes.

Lord Delamere, when Mr. Cholmondley, of Vale Royal, Cheshire, was a star in Leicestershire some five and thirty years ago. His Lordship went, moreover, well over Cheshire, where he was looked up to as a sportsman who has done honour to the name. That he was for many, many, seasons a first-flight man in Leicestershire is generally known and acknowledged, apparent, indeed, from the place allotted to him in the Coplow song ; and in a ludicrous poem, never, I believe, published, the following description is given of him at the finish of a long run, when almost every horse was tired :

“ See, Chom’ley from Cheshire comes striding along,
His spurs in the sides how they’re digging ;
But his horse’s cock’d tail shows all won’t avail,
And, by Jove, there is no need of figging.”

But pardon a short digression. When I exhibit Lord Delamere as a pattern for elegant horsemanship, and all the qualifications of a British sportsman, allow me to make use of him as one more exemplar. If English noblemen, and gentlemen of large possessions, were to follow his steps, not over a country only, but in passing as much time as their various avocations will allow them in the county from whence their means are derived ; in mixing in the sports and pastimes of the people, and in diffusing amongst them a greater share of those good things which Providence has allotted to them here, the aristocracy of England would be in better odour than it now is. I have reason to believe, that Lord Delamere will be remembered in Cheshire for another century to come, not only as a sportsman, but as having combined the elegant deportment of the man of fashion with the unaffected simplicity and useful acquirements of the country gentleman—a character that has been held in reverence in all ages of the world, as productive of good to nearly all classes of society. In fact, we might almost say that, from its presence—

“ The good and bad an equal boon receive.”

One of the best men that ever went over Leicestershire opens the ball in schedule E. This is no other than Mr. Empson, or—as he was called in that country—the Flying Parson. He was also, I believe, the first man who appeared there with a clipped horse, but *such a horse* as seldom appeared there before, or has been seen there since ! He called him *Shaven*. He possessed every good quality of a hunter, speed, stoutness, and temper, with knowledge of all kinds of fencing, and that quite in perfection. Mr. Empson had another capital hunter, called *Morven*, on which he shone in several crack runs ; and which is introduced, with his rider, into Ferneley’s famous picture of “ hounds going up wind, best pace.” I never saw a quicker man over a country than Mr. Empson, as, indeed, his “ *nom de chasse* ” implies.

I have heard so much of the Hon. John Elliot in letters from India, that I very much lament not having seen him before he quitted England, but which I should have done had I visited Nim North, as I at one time intended. I should have liked to have seen him sailing away upon *Negro*, as his friend and countryman describes. I have reason to believe he was an awkward customer in any country ; and from all I heard of him, he might sing what another of his countrymen sang :

“ What dar meddle wi’ me,
And wha dar meddle wi’ me ?
For my name it is (big) * Jock Elliot,
And wha dar meddle wi’ me ! ”

There are two conspicuous riders in their respective countries, of the name of Evans Evans. One commonly known as “ Captain,” a Duke of Beaufort’s man ; and the other, the proprietor of an hotel at Wolverhampton. The Captain distinguished himself one season in Leicestershire, on a large grey horse he had at that time, but on the rest of his stud he was found too slow for “ that there shire,” as Tom Wingfield used to call it. Captain Evans, however, always had a good place with hounds in his own country, and was the owner of the grey gelding, *Grimaldi*, which has lately cut so good a figure in steeple-chases. Mr. Evans of Wolverhampton, was one of the best men over Staffordshire, and, in consequence, sold some good horses at good prices. There were two brothers by the name of Eyton (of Leeswood) who rode well, in Sir Richard Puleston’s country.

The letter E, I am sorry to observe, produces another short list. But it makes up in *weight* what it wants in numbers, for it produces two of the heaviest men, with perhaps one exception, that ever rode *fast* after hounds ; I mean the Messrs. Edge, of Nottinghamshire, brothers. I dare say several of my readers will remember my having previously spoken of Mr. Thomas Edge, who resided with Mr. Assheton Smith, at Quorn, when he hunted Leicestershire, particularly distinguishing himself with hounds. In short, his character at Melton was this—“ *No man can beat Tom Edge for twenty minutes* ”—the said Tom Edge being twenty stone in his saddle ! ! Those were the days of his famous horses, Banker, Gayman, and Remus ; and, talk of prodigies, what was the Roman Remus, hanging on the teats of the she wolf, to this British Remus carrying Tom Edge alongside the leading hounds of Tom Smith’s pack, and beating, in the burst, four-fifths of the light weights on their three hundred guinea horses ! Why, an old woman’s story at best, and after all not a whit more marvellous. Of the fame of Gayman, it is enough to say that he is the horse Mr. Compton offered fifty pounds to have *one* ride upon ; but it is still more extraordinary to relate of him, that his owner rode

* The original says “ little.”

him every Monday that hounds hunted in Leicestershire, for nine successive seasons ! Lord Middleton offered him twenty-two hundred guineas for Banker and Remus, which like a sportsman he refused, and I saw one of them—I now cannot exactly recollect which, but think it was Banker—the last time I was in Leicestershire, quite fresh at the cover side, in his *seventeenth* year. Mr. John Edge was even heavier than his brother, and there was very little to choose between them, as to pace. When I reflect upon what I have written I am lost in admiration, but as the motto to my arms is, “*Nil admirari*” ; which Horace says is the only plan to carry us quietly through life, I can only once more exclaim—what a noble animal is *the horse* ! And if I were disposed to be astonished, can I wonder that a heathen should pay homage to him, or that he should be made the subject of *the finest poetry in the Bible*.*

I now come to the champion of the hunting field, in his day, the late Lord Forester, who was in his prime when I first saw him in Leicestershire. It requires, however, the pen of one who saw still more of him than I did to do justice to the merits of this first-rate horseman and unrivalled judge of a hunter. Perhaps no man enjoyed, for so long a period of years, the reputation that his lordship did ; but, what is not invariably the case, he was entitled to that reputation, for a finer rider over a country never followed a hound. His superiority, indeed, was exhibited in one striking point. He rode heavy—fourteen stone, at least—but horses could go quite at the top of the thing, as the term is, with him, *and to the end*, which could not do so with, by two stone, lighter men, and good men too. This fact, indeed, was acknowledged by his intimate friend, and competitor for riding fame, Lord Delamere, who spoke from actual experience of it. That excellent sportsman and fine horseman has been heard to admit, that “ a horse under Forester was as good as he was under himself, with the advantage of nearly two stone in his favour.” Lord Forester’s seat on his saddle was extremely powerful, and at the same time very elegant ; but he had the quintessence of a fine hand, and that did the business. It was quite delightful to see how he handed his horses over their fences, without letting them over-jump themselves,—than which nothing brings them sooner to a standstill, under weight. His observance of *pace*, and its effects, likewise had no doubt been *his* guide, before others had paid the same deference to them as he did, and here was a signal advantage. “ ‘*Tis the pace that kills*,” said he, and Solomon has no truer proverb—applicable as well to the rider as to his horse. “ *Nil violentum est perpetuum*.”

All those who knew this celebrated sportsman also knew the natural gaiety of his disposition, and how fond he was of what is termed a joke, and particularly

* See the “Guardian,” No. 86.

when he himself had the best of it. It may be expected then that the chances and disasters of a fox-chase frequently afforded him a theme. On one occasion, it is told of him, that, having the lead in a quick thing, and no one close on his heels, he came to a park paling which no horse could leap. His quick eye, however, espied a small bridle gate, in which the park-keeper had left his key ; so popping through it quickly, his lordship turned the key after him, put it into his pocket, and "bade the field good bye." On another, when in the same enviable situation—i.e. having the lead—he leaped into a deep pit brimfull of water. As he was in the act of swimming out of it, he observed a man on foot warning those who were following him of their danger. "Hold your tongue," roared his lordship, "we shall have it full in a minute." But did Lord Forester, like Mr. Childe, never press upon hounds ? Now and then, I have reason to believe ; which called forth the following rebuke of Mr. Meynell. "We had a pretty *find* to-day," said he, "first came the fox, then Cecil Forester, *and then my hounds.*"*

It may be naturally asked by those who did not know him, or rather by those who were not born when he was going, whether all this good judgment and fine riding did not turn to good account in Lord Forester's stables ? Indeed, reader, it did. Not only could such of his stud as were really good ones command his own prices, but those which were indifferent (and who has all good ones ?) found buyers. "I bought him of Forester," was always considered worth a hundred, especially in the provincials ; and a word in commendation from him, would generally sell another man's hunter for something more than he was worth. But a good name should carry weight, if the horse cannot do so. I did once remember several of his horses, but time has worn away the recollection of them. His splendid hunter, *Bernardo*, however, I cannot forget, nor his leaping the immense space of ten yards and some inches with him, over a brook ; which space was measured by some of the party visiting at Belvoir Castle at the time, in consequence of the feat being discussed in the evening of the day on which it was performed. One other person took the brook, to whom credit will be given in due time. I shall conclude this trifling notice of so eminent a sportsman by transcribing a few lines I recollect to have written to the editor of the Old Magazine, on the melancholy event of his death. "Were I to say Lord Forester was pre-eminent *as a sportsman*, I might perhaps somewhat exceed the bounds of strict veracity ; but I hesitate not in asserting, that, in his knowledge of the points, action, and

* There is an old saying that, "when a man's character is established, he may wear an old coat." Thus the high repute of Lord Forester allowed him now and then to be seen in situations which others could not be seen in, ready for the start ; I mean when hounds were at check, as well as in chase. In short, he would be always "creeping on," as he used to say, knowing the ill effects of having to make up lost ground, with his weight.

capabilities of the English hunter, and in his skill in the art of riding to hounds, he has never been surpassed in any day."

It is said, on no mean authority, that a man who succeeds to his father's reputation, must be greater than him to be considered great. The present Lord Forester, however, would be sorry I should grant to him such a distinction, and I shall let him rest upon his own merits. Suffice it to say of his lordship, that when at Oxford he greatly distinguished himself as a rider, for his early years, in Sir Thomas Mostyn's, the Duke of Beaufort's and the Duke of Grafton's hunts ; and where, may I ask, has he not been conspicuous ? Is there a quick thing in Leicestershire in which Lord Forester is not in his place, and that place front rank ? Have not there been a few things lately with his own hounds, which even, in these flying times, himself and *a very few only saw* ? I am wrongly informed if such has not been the case. But I think I once said, I never saw a young sportsman more fond of hounds than this kind-hearted nobleman ; and if, as the poet says,

"A willing heart adds feather to the heel,
And makes *the clown* a winged Mercury,"

how must it add to the speed of such a well-bred one as he is, with his father's fame fresh upon him. God speed him then, say I ; and I trust he will be at the head of the Belvoir hounds all his life, and that life a long one.

I have not yet done with the sporting name of Forester, Major or Frank Forester, par excellence, brother to the late Lord and son-in-law to the Duke of Cleveland, will be remembered in Leicestershire for a hundred years to come, not only as an excellent rider to hounds, but, in the strictest acceptation of the word, a sportsman. As a horseman, however, it is that I have to speak of him here, and it is enough to say, that, with a younger brother's stud, seldom exceeding six, few men saw more of hounds, during *many* years' residence at Melton, than he did, or could give a better account of a run than himself. But what a rare, what, in these days, an *uncommon* token of a sportsman did he exhibit in invariably riding his own horse to cover, let the distance be what it might. Think of a Melton man being lighted out of his stable-yard, some dark morning in December, to ride his horse sixteen miles to the place of meeting, through the dirty cross lanes, or still more dubious field-roads of Leicestershire ; perhaps trying to decipher a guide post by the glimmering of a blood-red star, or the faint light of a waning moon. Such, however, was Frank Forester's almost daily task in the winter ; but why did he impose this task upon himself ? Why, because he was then certain that his horse would be taken properly to cover, and fit to go through a good run, should he get one. Nor was this all. The horseman had much to do with it. He was averse to having his hunters'

mouths pulled about and abused by boys, letting alone the hazards they are subject to in their hands. As a rider to hounds then, I shall say no more of Major Forester than that, as Melton is the place in which that quality in man is appreciated, and—availing myself of a vulgar, but rather expressive phrase—“*no mistake*,” it will be found to place him high on the list of those who have gone best ; and he appears in an enviable situation in Ferneley’s capital picture of the famous *Coplow to Ranksborough run*, painted for Mr. Osbaldeston—over that part of the country which, I ventured to state in my description of it, is worthy of forming a panorama of fox-hunting. The Major took his final leave of Melton about fourteen years back ; and as it so happened that I witnessed his departure, I can bear record to the fact, that it was very generally regretted by his brother sportsmen and friends, who doubtless felt, that, “take him for all in all, they might not look upon his like again.” I have not seen Captain Forester, of the 12th Lancers (brother to Lord Forester), in the field, but I learn from those who have that there is “no mistake” there.

Speaking of Melton, leads me to consider what other good man from that quarter, known to me, claims notice in schedule F, and at present I can only muster two. The Hon. Henry Fielding, brother of Lord Denbigh, was a neat rider, and generally well horsed. John Fryatt, once landlord of the George Hotel, a very good man over a country, and better versed than most men in horse-flesh. He was once groom to the celebrated Mr. Brummell, and I well remember the tip-top style in which his horses were turned out. But why did I omit Mr. Brummell in the B’s ? His good nature will excuse me if I place him among the Beaus, for, although far from the worst, he did not aspire to equestrian fame. In the song I have alluded to, he stands thus :

“ Beau Brummell, God bless us, how ventures he here,
Delighting our eyes and our noses ?
He splashes through ditches, in kerseymere breeches,
All streaming with attar of roses.” *

I have not hunted much with the Duke of Grafton’s hounds, only getting a day occasionally at Whistley Wood, or some of the covers on the Brackley side the country, when staying in the neighbourhood of Bicester. What I saw of the late lamented Lord Charles Fitzroy, however, convinced me that he was not only a

* I have perfect recollection of seeing Mr. Brummell turn out of the Duke of Rutland’s carriage one day, at the cover side, in his kerseymeres ; but when I saw him mount a coal-black horse, in *beautiful* condition, I thought the *tout ensemble* excellent,—the polish was good. I am sorry to say, Mr. Brummell had left Calais previous to my arrival in France ; he was much respected there, and was generally addressed by the tradesmen as “My Lord.” So much for the polish !

beautiful horseman, but, to my eye, one of the most judicious riders to hounds of his days, which all who knew him lamented were so unexpectedly cut short. He appeared to me also to ride exactly the sort of hunter suited to his country. Indeed, I never saw him, that I did not envy his horses. Such timber jumpers ! Lord James Fitzroy was also a good one, and a writer in the *Old Magazine* (Fox-hunter Rough and Ready) thus speaks of him—"I must make honourable mention," says he, "of *a stranger* in this land (Devonshire), but no stranger to fox-hunting, he having hunted with the very best hounds, in the very best countries. He did us the honour to attend almost every meeting, and we had the pleasure to see that he delighted in the sport. He did not despise our hounds, he did not abuse our country ; but, like a true and gallant sportsman, and a fearless rider as he is, was never away from the chase, and was well with the hounds, even in this, according to * * * *, worst of all countries. He did enjoy the runs, and was not stopped by prejudice, or by banks, by fashion, or by stiles. *That stranger is Lord James Fitzroy of the 10th Hussars.* God bless him !" Now I call this an excellent description of one sportsman, by another—indeed, quære—could Cicero have shown up a brother-pleader better ?

Although I have occasionally seen Mr. Foljambe in Leicestershire, and frequently in the New Forest, I cannot speak of his riding, but I believe he is one of the bruising sort. In fact, a man so fond of hounds as he appeared to me to be, must always be with them if possible. Mr. Fellowes, the late master of the Warwickshire, was a horseman, and so was Mr. Ford of the Cheshire ; and in a difficult country too, for men who ride *fast*. But there was one good one whose name comes in this list to whom I should like to have given the Promethean touch of youth. I mean the venerable Mr. Fulwar Fowle, whom I saw going so well in the Craven country, when I visited Mr. Warde ; George the Third said of Mr. Fowle, that he was one of the best riders to hounds in his dominions ; but George the Third did not go to Melton. However, when I say that Mr. Fowle had one of his legs broken, and almost all his teeth knocked out, by a fall, and drank a bumper to fox-hunting, on the evening of the same day, we must allow him to be deserving of a royal compliment.

Speaking of Mr. Warde reminds me of old Bob Forfeit, his huntsman, whom I have seen go very well over Northamptonshire, when he hunted it. The last time he met my eye was in the stables of his old master, at his seat in Kent, with whom he has long lived as groom, and he was the cause of some merriment ; but mirth generally accompanied the doings and sayings of Mr. Warde. The hunters had been taken up from grass three days before, fat as bacon hogs, but, according to their owner's account to me, "summered à la Nimrod," as the term

is with some. "In rare order to begin the season with, Bob," said I to him the next morning, in the stable, before breakfast, having my hand on the ribs of one of them ; "full of old oats, I understand." "No, nor new ones neither," replied Bob, "unless they found them in the park." Dick Foster, another of the old school, and a capital horseman, must not be overlooked. When I first knew him he was whipping-in to Lord Foley, who then hunted Worcestershire, and was considered a very fine horseman in those days, particularly distinguishing himself by going through an extremely severe run upon a four year old,* when almost every horse in the field was beaten. He had *very good hands* and a very close seat, and those that think these qualifications are not in daily request with such as ride over Mr. Villebois's part of Hampshire, are very greatly in error. It is true there are no wide brooks, no black-thorn hedges, that knock men and horses backwards, as there are in the "swell" countries ; but the horseman's art is much wanted in handing his horse over the wattled fences, *with the deep falls that are on the farther side of them*, occasioned by their being so frequently placed on a bank. There is likewise much timber, and plenty of hedge and ditch leaping, which Foster performs with a master-hand, and he is the best man to get *quickly* through a rough cover I ever met with, unless it be Mr. Smith, formerly of the Craven hounds.

* Afterwards Sir Edward Mostyn's *Infant*, seventeen hands high !



CHAPTER VI



GRAMMARIANS tell us there are two G's in the alphabet, the hard one and the soft one, so, with your leave, we will begin with one of the hard ones—Sir Bellingham Graham, Bart., who may be classed amongst the first and *fastest* horsemen England ever produced ; and when we consider his weight—never under sixteen stone—nothing more would be wanted to establish his riding fame. How then can I do better than echo the words of the Melton men, when speaking of Sir Bellingham as master of the Quorn hounds, such authority being not likely to be disputed. “During the two seasons,”

said they, “which Sir Bellingham Graham hunted Leicestershire, there was not a single instance of his not being *well with his hounds*—the more remarkable, as the country was not only new to him, but in the first of his years, it was most unusually deep, owing to much rain, and his sport prodigious.” On two or three occasions, however, he appears to have performed wonders. On a low-backed horse, called Cock Robin, he slipped away from a large field, by leaping into, and out of, a high sheep-pen, and which, strange to say, the horse performed without being turned round for the second leap. In a celebrated burst from Glenn Gorse to Stanton Wood, he took the lead and kept it, although two or three of the best light weights in England—Colonel George Anson, and Mr. William Coke amongst them—were close on his heels at starting. In Shropshire also he once or twice did the same thing, particularly in a run over the worst country in England for a heavy weight, being full of boggy drains ; and on a previously untried roan horse, which he afterwards sold to Mr. Maxse. But it has been that Yorkshire eye of the worthy baronet, to the good and bad points of a horse that has—added to other essentials—enabled him thus to shine. Who

that can remember his stud when he had the Quorn hounds, in which, as the old frequenters of Melton observed, there were more *great good* horses than it had ever before contained, will not agree with me in saying, that if an arbiter were to be chosen to decide upon disputed properties in the horse, the owner of that stud was not entitled to the post? The Baron, Jerry, Paul, Bees'-wax, Treacle, Cock Robin, *cum multis aliis*, which I cannot name (but amongst which were two sold to a stranger, and never heard of afterwards, for a thousand guineas), would back me in this opinion, if all they performed under his great weight was brought to light.

They may "laugh at scars, who never felt a wound," but one of the many proofs that hunting is inherent in our nature, is the hazard that awaits the pursuit of it. Even the fine horsemanship of Sir Bellingham, has not borne him harmless through the perils and dangers of the chase, and in one instance he nearly lost his life. Of what *very hard rider*, however, may not the same be said? Perhaps of none; but, as Shakespeare says, "wounds as well as words sometimes 'smack of honour,'" I shall briefly notice one fall he had with the Quorn hounds, merely for the sake of giving the sequel to it. An ox-fence presented itself just as he was killing his fox. His horse alighted on a post, and was turned over on his (Sir B's) chest. He was insensible for more than twenty-four hours; was bled three times the first day, and confined to his bed five days! But (*ehou!* as the Q. R. has it) what did he do on the seventh? Why, he was driven out in his carriage, muffled up in shawls, great coat, &c., to *take the air*, and "see them find." But he took something else; for he took the command of the hounds, hunted them through part of a long run, till nature said "enough," and he was near finding death, for he was in a dreadful state of exhaustion, and was with difficulty conveyed home. In Shropshire, likewise, he got an awful fall, and from the two combined, his sufferings were long and severe.

Very little need be said of another Yorkshire baronet, now, alas! no more—I mean the late Sir Harry Goodricke—as a horseman. Were I to look into the records of the chase, I could find several instances of his distinguishing himself—and, once or twice I believe I may say, "beyond his fellows,"—at the end of long and severe runs, which we must admit to be the strongest testimony to the character of a good rider to hounds. Let me see—we must go back more than eighteen years for one fact. December the 15th, 1824, "the Squire's" hounds met at Widmerpool, when Walton Thorns produced the best fox of the year, who stood before them one hour and fifty-five minutes, with a good scent. In the first half hour, great distress was exhibited—horses standing still in all directions. The "Squire," Holyoake, and Goodricke had the best of it most of the time, but the baronet had the turn at the last. A few days afterwards, the same hounds met in the same

country (Owthorpe), when at the end of an almost unheard of continued burst of an hour and a quarter, Sir Harry killed the fox by himself, a fresh horse having met him at Six Hills. In the same month of 1826, he signalized himself in Lord Lonsdale's great day from Laund Wood, in the severest part of the Harborough country. I am told Sir Harry rode still harder and, of course, better, with his own hounds, and he could shine on horses on which other good men could do nothing. His notion of what is called a hunter was likewise correct. "It depends," said he, "on what *place* his rider takes in a run, whether he is worth a shilling or not." His showing them the way into Longford Brook on one occasion, when so much overflowed, should not be forgotten, though it is well known that he "swam like a cork," as Dick Knight said, when he was leaping over the gentleman in the brook.

In a private letter I wrote to the then Editor of the New Sporting Magazine (1833), I thus expressed myself on the decease of Sir Harry Goodricke—"Poor Goodricke! What a thundering blow to fox-hunting!" This expression got into print, but had I known that such would have been the case, I should have qualified it by saying, "what a thundering blow to *Leicestershire*," inasmuch as, great as is the loss of any spirited and devoted master of fox-hounds, still it is to be hoped, that, lowering as may be the present prospect, the cause of fox-hunting hangs not on so slender a thread as that of one man's existence,—but that it will continue for at least a century to come, even were half a score Sir Harry Goodrickes to be swept away. To Leicestershire, Sir Harry's loss was all but irretrievable, as has been shown by the short periods in which it has been in the hands of his successors, and the uncertain prospect of its continuing to support the character it has hitherto sustained, of the first fox-hunting country under the sun. Had Sir Harry not been so prematurely cut off, there is every reason to believe, from his untiring zeal, and sportsmanlike devotion to hunting, that he would have continued a master of hounds in Leicestershire for a long series of years, and redeemed the country from the reflection cast upon it, of having—despite its excellencies and advantages—been so often in one man's hands to-day, and in another's to-morrow: in fact, changing masters almost with the seasons.

On the retirement of Lord Southampton, Sir Harry Goodricke took possession of the Quorn hounds, without any subscription whatever—undertaking to pay cover-rents, damages, and all other expenses; and not approving of the situation of the other kennels, as too much on the outside of the country, he built a large one with very extensive stables at Thrussington, a small village a little to the left of the road leading from Leicester to Melton Mowbray, on the bank of the river.

Sir Harry Goodricke did not attempt to hunt his own hounds, but continued

Mountford, Lord Southampton's huntsman, who came to his lordship from the Oakley, with some hounds, in that situation, in the room of Dick Burton, who went to his old master, Mr. Assheton Smith, in Hants. In consequence, however, of Mountford's illness, during parts of the two seasons in which Sir Harry hunted Leicestershire, Will Derry, his first whip, officiated in that capacity, occasionally assisted by Sir Harry. Sir Harry—as he had a good right to do, himself paying the piper—dropped the title of the Quorn hounds, and called them his own. I say he had a good right to do this ; and still I would not have done it, there being something classical in the word “Quorn,” associated as it was with the classic names of Meynell, Sefton, Smith, Osbaldeston, and Graham, who had all had the Quorn hounds in their turn, not forgetting the well-known couplet of Loraine, another classic name :—

———“Now Contract, says Dick,
By the Lord, but we'll show these d——d *Quornites* the trick.”

The style and manner in which Sir Harry Goodricke hunted Leicestershire, was above all praise, and such as we naturally should have looked for from a man so thoroughly a sportsman as he was. He had upwards of a hundred couples of hounds in his kennel, and fifty hunters in his stables, an establishment at once grand, sportsmanlike, and Englishmanlike, yet we must admit, incurring an expenditure that no one individual ought to be suffered to sustain for the amusement of others, as well as himself. I have heard it said, and doubt not the truth of the assertion, that six thousand pounds a year did not cover his charges at the year's end. Let us suppose, then, he had kept his hounds as long as John Warde kept his. The immense sum of three hundred and forty-two thousand pounds would have been lost to himself and his heirs.

Sir Harry Goodricke was every inch a thorough sportsman, and was such from his boyhood, a little anecdote corroborative of which I can produce. When at Eton school, he had on some occasion or other—the Montem, perhaps—to pass in procession before the King, in the presence of the head master. Guess the surprise then of the said head master, when Goodricke made his appearance in a red coat, down to his heels, and large enough for a grown-up man. The fact was, it was necessary that he should have a fancy coat of some sort, and he had the one in which he appeared made large enough to fit an old whipper-in of his father's. The notice of the King was attracted by his grotesque appearance, and he inquired his name—saying, when informed of him, that he knew his breed to be a sporting one. The fact is, that independently of his father, the name of few men was better known in England than that of the celebrated parson Goodricke, the breeder of some of the best race-horses of his day.

I will not take upon myself to assert that Sir Harry Goodricke could have hunted a pack of fox-hounds with success, because I am unable to say whether he studied the *science* of hunting sufficiently to enable him to do so, but from his manner of riding to them it was evident he watched their working with attention, and unlike too many very hard riders, he was not given to press upon them. Still there is something more than the mere being able to turn well with hounds, and to know when they are on a scent or not, to qualify a man for a huntsman. He must have a certain intuitive knowledge of the general line foxes take, adapting his experience of it to his country, and he must possess other qualities than those which guide him in riding near to hounds. But I liked to see Sir Harry Goodricke over a country. His style of riding was exceedingly fine, embellished, I may say, by his very manly person, and the apparent coolness with which he encountered every obstacle that presented itself.

Trifles "light as air" occasionally speak volumes, and the zeal of this lamented sportsman may be estimated by the following incident, which I witnessed. We were returning to Melton one extremely cold and blustering evening, when nearly at the town's end we met Sir Harry, with a hound in a string, which had followed some one to Melton, he being on his road with him to Thrussington—imposing upon himself the most unpleasant task of riding upwards of ten miles instead of getting quickly home, and changing his wet clothes.

There was a time when I thought Sir Harry Goodricke not popular with the Leicestershire farmers, on account, it was said, of his having occasionally spoken lightly of their horses; but this was not the case afterwards. When he hunted the country, no man could stand better with them, and I repeat, that his death was a heavy blow to fox-hunting—to that in Leicestershire, especially.

Mr. Gilmour is also a trump at this game, and accounted one of the best men now over Leicestershire; and he is likewise entitled to the appellation of a *sportsman*, riding to enjoy hounds. He is capitally mounted for his weight, no change, I should think, out of fourteen stone. Mr. Gilmour started the Leicestershire steeple racing, having matched one of his stud (Plunder) against Captain Ross's Harlequin, and shortly after against his (Captain R.'s) Polecat, winning both matches, but only riding the first. The parties meeting on the day after the last match, at a dinner given by Mr. White, at Melton, the articles were drawn up for the *great* steeple-chase, won by Mr. Wormold's Magic, named by Sir Harry Goodricke. I hear a very good account of Lord Gardner in Leicestershire, but, with the exception of Mr. Elliott, I have mentioned no person, as a rider, whom I have not seen in the field.

Mr. Green of Rolleston Hall, Leicestershire, I have seen, and no man would

wish to see a better performer over a country. He rides much in the style of John Bower, and John Drake, very quiet, but very quick, reminding one of the "*suaviter in modo*," but "*fortiter in re*," for no man goes more determinedly to work.

There are two Gilberts next on my list. First, Mr. Gilbert, well known at Melton, as a good man at every thing and whom I once saw sadly damaged by a fall, with the Quorn hounds; and who was one of *a very few* who saw the end of one of the most severe runs Osbaldeston had in the Quorn country. The distance from point to point was eighteen miles, but the hounds ran hard for two hours and seventeen minutes, so that much more ground must have been traversed. The other is General Gilbert, eminently distinguished in India (Bengal) as a gentleman-jockey over the course, and one of the best riders over the country. The Colonel returned to England about sixteen years back, and has hunted regularly in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, &c., appearing little the worse for more than thirty years of Asiatic life. In short, despite of attacks of the liver, spleen, and jungle fever—some of which he has no doubt had a taste of—he is as sound as a roach, and can ride well to hounds. Perhaps I may be allowed a short digression, pardonable in speaking of so eminent a sportsman as General Gilbert was acknowledged to be in India. Soon after his arrival from India, he attended the Curragh of Kildare races. Twelve horses were named for a gentleman-jockey stakes, but only eleven such jockies could be found. On its being known that the General was on the course, he was applied to by the stewards, when, mounting on the instant, he rode the winner.

Speaking of Warwickshire reminds me of Mr. Charles Gould, son of the late Colonel of the Notts Militia, and nephew to the late Lord Dormer. He was an excellent horseman, with plenty of nerve, and showed much judgment in selecting young horses, and perfecting their education as hunters—no bad test of *hand*. Mr. Gaskyl, formerly a leading man with the old Berkeley, but of later years quartered at Northampton, with good nerve and hand, was just the man for the Northamptonshire black-thorns, and even those of Crick* cracked before him. Mr. Walter Giffard, at the head of the Albrighton pack, was a capital hand over an awkward country. He was one of the best creepers I ever met with. Indeed I have marvelled to see the places he poked through on his old grey horse, when he hunted his father's harriers in Staffordshire; and I have more than once seen him go the pace over Warwickshire, on some of Mr. Robert Canning's horses. In short, he has always been considered a beautiful horseman. Of a similar class are the two Captains Greenwood, whom I used to see in Hampshire—particularly accomplished horsemen, and I think I have already expressed my opinion that

* The most strongly fenced country in England.

they would distinguish themselves *any where*. I saw another good man in the same part of Hampshire (the Hambledon country). I mean Captain Georges, whose famous grey mare—those grey mares are generally good—carried him to the end of that *awful* run Mr. Smith had, some years back, when his hounds, and the eight persons who could live with them, remained at Colonel George Wyndham's for the night. In the same country I likewise saw the Hon. William Gage, a very good performer, and who was one of the above-mentioned eight ; and Mr. Charles Græme, of the old school, but a reputed good one through life : and I went to Winchester races once on purpose to see him ride a match in, I think, *his seventieth year* ! but one of the horses being amiss, it did not come off, as the term is. Of Lord Gage I have seen too little to speak, but his lordship was an excellent friend to fox-hunting, and one to whom the East Sussex hunt stood greatly indebted.

Nothing displays the powers and capabilities of the horse more than his being able to carry a very heavy, and a very fast riding man, throughout a long run, over a soft country, strongly enclosed. But when we consider the *whelming* effect of such a man as Mr. Gurney of Norwich, the mind almost refuses its belief at the recital of the extraordinary feats performed by him as a horseman—for he rode upwards of twenty stone—and in truth I may say the same of Messrs. Edge. But there are limits to all animal powers. The hare lies down, broken-hearted, before the hounds ; the greyhound stops, exhausted, behind the hare ; and even the race-horse, with a feather-weight on his back, sometimes shuts up when he is pinched. Would it not then be unreasonable to expect, that anything *unwinged*, any “beast of the earth,” could carry such a weight as Mr. Gurney's, at the pace he always went, longer than twenty minutes or half an hour ? Undoubtedly it would ; and that was generally the maximum with him, on high scenting days. But how brilliantly he went, and how splendidly he was mounted ! Indeed, as a friend and admirer of his astonishing performances said of him, a few years back, “No money is grudged for hunters likely to carry Mr. Gurney, and he never hunts a horse until he arrives at his full powers—namely, eight years old. Sober Robin and his master were prodigies in any country. He had a remarkably clever lad, who rode his second horse ; he was always forth-coming at the instant required, and Mr. Gurney was very quick in exchanging. He was one of those decided men at his fences that I delight to see. If he came into a field, and steered for a certain point, as his exit from it, it must have been something very queer, or unforeseen, that made him change his mind.”

I believe the foregoing to be a very faithful description of this “great artist,” as Tom Strickland would have said. As for Sober Robin, he was still more of a *prodigy* than his owner, and whoever doubts it, has only to see a gate near

Northampton over which he once carried Mr. Gurney. One might really imagine him to have been of the blood of Medusa—the winged sort—for it is scarcely possible to attribute so great an effort to natural, animal powers. The gate, also, as high as Robin's back, should have been “in bold relief” on the marble, and after the ancient fashion an inscription—something like this :—

Full twenty minutes I had gone “*the pace*”
And leap'd this gate, with twenty stone, in chase.

I believe Robin was the horse for which Sir Francis Burdett offered Mr. Gurney a thousand guineas, but I am not quite certain of the fact, and I have nothing here to refresh my memory on these points.

Challenging a comparison with Mr. Gurney as to weight in the scales, but not as to pace over a country, was Stephen Goodall, once huntsman to Lord Sefton, and afterwards to the late Sir Thomas Mostyn. Stephen was a bundle of garbage, and troubled with a short cough, nevertheless, in proof of his horsemanship, I am bound to say, he was, excepting in the last few years of his hunting them, not very far from his hounds, even in rather a sharp scurry. It is true Sir Thomas horsed him well, giving it out that whether wanting him at the time or not, he would *always* purchase a horse likely to suit Stephen, and money did not stop him. But Stephen was difficult to be suited ; he would not ride anything more than about fifteen hands high—for he could not mount one that was higher—and it was no easy matter to find as much power, combined with good breeding, as was necessary to carry his weight, in a horse of that height. I saw Goodall for part of two seasons in Leicestershire, and several in Oxfordshire, but never remember his having a fall.

The name of Goodall, reminds me of Goosey, once huntsman to the Duke of Rutland, and afterwards to Lord Forester. As a horseman, he claims a first place, being just what a man should be to assist hounds in a flying country like his. He had an eye like a hawk—very quick to his points, and was a more than commonly sportsmanlike-looking person on his horse. I understand he distinguished himself by his riding in the fine runs his hounds had for some successive days in the month of February, 1833. But, have I not given him the precedence of his superiors, or is it that all these good qualities have ennobled Mr. Goosey (not a very aristocratic name, to be sure) in my eyes ? At all events I must not omit Lord Robert Grosvenor, who is a good horseman, and very fond of hounds, nor Mr. Gregson, one of the keenest sportsmen and best riders in the Lambton hunt.

But where is the crack man in his day of all the light weights in G ? Have I kept him, as a child does a bit of sweetmeat in his pudding—for the last mouthful ? I mean the Hon. George Germaine—decidedly the champion of England in the

saddle, taking him over a country, *and over the course*. It is true, he was not allowed to be so good over the course as his brother, the Duke of Dorset—an extraordinary man also on the road—but, combining the qualifications for the race-course and the field, George Germaine had not his equal. But Nature formed him to ride ; he was not only cast in the jockey mould, but he had an iron grasp, and a nerveless arm that pulled him through all difficulties in a run, how severe soever the country. As I now enjoy hunting only in the calm retrospect of the past, and as Cæsar recorded his own conquests, may I be allowed to mention an enviable situation I was once placed in, with this said Hon. George Germaine ? We had run our fox, best pace, for about twenty-five minutes with Lord Sefton's hounds, when a sort of mill-dam presented itself. I think I see the place now ; the rat-holes in the bank, and the still water, looking deep. He led the way ; a gentleman's servant followed him ; and I followed the gentleman's servant. Where the rest of the field crossed it, I know not ; but this I know—George Germaine, the groom, and myself, only were present when the fox died, which was in less than ten minutes afterwards. “Your horse has carried you well,” said Mr. G. “He has,” said I ; “considering I only purchased him out of a dealer's string, this day se'night, at Rugby fair.” Well—of course the mill-dam was a hundred or two in my pocket. It was very near being much more. Many questions were asked about *the grey* : one or two persons said, in my hearing, that he would carry Lord Sefton ; but Lord Sefton would not have said so, for fourteen stone was his maximum. However, there were plenty of customers ; but mark the result—and especially all ye *young* ones, of whom I myself was one, at this period ! As we were trotting away, along a bridle road, to a fresh cover, I put the grey at a fence, instead of letting him go through the gate, when he fell headlong, in the presence of nearly the whole field, and all the fat was in the fire. “You are rightly served,” said John Lockley, who had been recommending a rich man to purchase him ; “your horse was chilled and stiff, and had more sense than you had, for he wanted to go through the gate.” However, he was afterwards well known in Warwickshire as Contract, by Windlestone, a brilliant hunter, and the winner of hunter's stakes, matches, &c., to a considerable amount.

The late Sir Stephen Glynne's career was short, having been cut off in “manhood's prime,” leaving an excellent name behind him, as the right sort of country gentleman. I remember seeing him greatly distinguish himself in a crack day with the late Lord Vernon's hounds from Bosworth, when many of the Quorn men were out. In fact, it was a trial of strength and speed between orange and red, the former being the colour of Lord Vernon's hunt, and the latter that of the Quornites. There being at this period some quick men in Lord Vernon's country, the contest

was very severe, and it was hard to say who had the best of the burst, which was awfully sharp to Tooley. I have, however, a perfect recollection of Sir Stephen Glynne going particularly well on a white-faced chesnut, and gaining much credit by the day. Sir Henry Peyton (who, with the late Lord Foley and Sir Stephen, joined housekeeping at that time near Quorn) also went brilliantly on his famous horse Watchmaker. A neighbour of Sir Stephen's, Mr. Glegg, of the Cheshire, ranked high in that hunt ; and as long as his horse could go, no man could beat Mr. Guildford, the butcher, of Somerby, in Leicestershire, who rode Spartacus in the steeple-chase, but was beat by a bad fall.

The letter H—seldom indeed *mute*,—gives me a long list of capital performers in the field. With whom then shall I begin ? With a Lord ? Yes, and a good one too—Lord Howth who, in the county of Leicester, was generally placed quite at the top of the list, and that is saying enough. Indeed no man could ride bolder than Lord Howth did, all the time he was in Leicestershire, and in one particular instance he did what, perhaps, was never done before. He cleared so wide a place over the Belvoir (the Smité) brook that no man could follow him, and he had the fox in his hand nearly a quarter of an hour before any of the field came up ! He performed this feat on his famous horse Slug, the winner of ten out of twelve steeple-chases in Paddy's land. I believe I have already stated that this horse was afterwards in my possession, the late Lord Mountsandford having given 240 guineas for him, to his lordship, on his quitting Melton ; and I took him in part payment for a horse of mine that Lord M. considered more equal to his weight. It being the end of the season I had not many rides on Slug, but his manner of throwing himself over wide places was extraordinary, by a sort of second spring ; but where was the fulcrum ? Lord Howth had also another famous hunter at Melton, named, I think, Bergame. I saw him one day lark him over some tremendous fences, a practice he was not a little given to.

Now what can I say of Frank Holyoake (now Sir H. Goodricke) ? I mean what that is not known to every sportsman in England ? namely, that he was for some seasons undoubtedly the *fastest* rider after hounds in any county in England. Nay, might I not add, that for once hounds that have been too fast for Holyoake, he has been half a score times too fast for hounds ? But gently ! my pen ; don't be hard upon him ; he is a gallant fellow on a horse, and if he has pressed them now and then, and deserved a few reproofs from their huntsman, his greater merits must blot them out. Poor man, he is much to be pitied. He would ride nothing but thorough-bred ones ; he has no more nerve than a gate post ; and, as Dick Foster says, he hates a slow one. But, joking apart, if he had paid a little more attention to hounds in chase, he would have claimed a place amongst the hardest

and best riders to hounds England ever saw. But was it not delightful to see him go *his* pace? By heaven it was; it was half as fast again as nineteen in twenty of the generality of men who follow hounds go, and he appeared to sweep over the green grounds of Leicestershire like a swallow after its prey. This being admitted, it cannot be wondered at that he banished all half-bred horses from his stable, finding that, although there might be exceptions, it would be difficult to find any thing but pure blood, with wind and speed equal to his pace. He certainly had a beautiful stud; but what is extraordinary, his famous grey horse, Baronet, that he considered his best, and so often shone upon, was a very bad brook jumper! * On my asking him one day how he got him over all the brooks? his answer was "*some how*." He was one of the most perfect fencers I ever saw, and Lord Lichfield gave 220 guineas for him when very much worsted. The old and young Sheriff, Cross-bow, Clinker, and Smasher, afterwards the late Sir H. Goodricke's, were amongst the crack horses in his stud. Recollect, reader, my hero, in his saddle, gives no change out of thirteen stone! His younger brother, Mr. Thomas Holyoake, whom I have seen go in Staffordshire, would have been just such a clipper had he possessed the nags, for he was one of the few that were up at the end of the desperate Owthorpe day with the Quorn hounds, some years back, on one of his brother's horses.

Speaking of flyers over Leicestershire, I cannot tell to my recollection ever having seen the Hon. Martin Hawke, in Leicestershire; I think he left it about the year before I hunted in it, but, from all I have heard of him, I should imagine his style of riding to hounds much resembled that of Sir Holyoake Goodricke.

"And next him on Morgan, all rattle and talk,
Cramming over the fences, comes wild Martin Hawke;
But his neck he must break, surely, sooner or late,
As he'd rather ride over, than open, a gate." †

No bad character of a young one, which Mr. Hawke was in those days; but I have something more to say of him. The poets complain—and he himself is a poet—that there is one word in the English language to which they never could find a rhyme. That word is "*silver*." Now, unfortunately, *Hawke* answers to many, and amongst others to *walk*. Thus is our hero belied, for the sake of the rhyme, in the Coplow poem, and reduced to a walk; although I have heard his horse (a little thorough-bred one, called Tom Tit, and purchased afterwards by Mr. Shafto, of

* A very correct idea would have been conveyed to the uninitiated in these matters, if prints had been struck off from Ferneley's picture of "Hounds going best pace, up wind," Mr. Holyoake taking the lead, on Baronet.

† From "The hounds of old Raby for me."

Whitworth, Durham) carried him throughout this terrible day, and to Melton afterwards (twenty-one miles), in company with Messrs. Germaine and Musters. The critics say there should be no rhyme without reason. I never saw Lord Hawke in the field but one day, and we had then nothing to do, so I cannot speak to his lordship's riding.

Let us now turn to—excuse the pun—another of the flying species, another of the hawks. John Hawkes, late of Snitterfield, Warwickshire, but now of some place in Worcestershire, unknown to me, and a conspicuous character in Meynell's hunt—conspicuous not only as a rider, but as a sportsman. Indeed, what was considered a rare occurrence in those days, he committed to paper the result of his observations in the field, in a small pamphlet, called “The Meynellian Science, or Fox-hunting upon System,” which contains many judicious remarks. All those, however, who knew the man, will discern a peculiar manner of expressing himself, which he had recourse to through life; and it is apparent that a determined predilection for Mr. Meynell and his hounds, *and for Mr. Meynell and his hounds alone*, led him a little wide of the line in the extraordinary share of talent which he attributed to them in the field. But in alluding to him as a horseman, I must take leave to observe that it is more easy to excel in any gymnastic art when nature lends her aid, and Mr. Hawkes was turned out by her plastic hand in the very mould for a horseman; and I must own I have looked at him with admiration, on the Little Printer, or Feather-legs—both thorough bred—when putting them along with their best legs foremost. Of his race-riding I shall not speak here, it being well known and duly appreciated by every one who remembers his first-rate performances over the course; but as a workman over a country, and *as looking the character of a workman over a country*, I have rarely seen him excelled. He had his peculiarities. He considered himself entitled to ride in a hunting cap, which well became him; and although his leather breeches and boots showed they had “seen a little service”—I really believe he had them patched and darned for effect—yet the cut and fitting of every thing about him was excellent. He looked the real sportsman. It is some years since I have seen him, and I fear he is becoming an old man, having long since given up hunting. But is he not old before his time?—that is to say, does he not *fancy* himself old? for, from his very abstemious mode of life, John Hawkes ought to have been an evergreen; and his *fidus Achates*, John Lockley, was a young man long after he was his age.

The bee has its honey and the bee has its sting. Hunting in Leicestershire is the cream of the thing, but the misfortune attending it is that every thing after it is skim milk. So thought Mr. Hawkes. To use his own words—“A sportsman, who like himself had hunted several seasons in Leicestershire, and enjoyed

the confidence of Mr. Meynell, was spoiled for any other country." Nevertheless he carried this too far, for he afterwards lived and hunted many years in Warwickshire, a country that used to rank third after Leicestershire for hounds. In this country he saw many fine runs, but still he asserted that "*Warwickshire could not show a run*,—there is not room in it," said he. Indeed ! but he must know better, and I am happy to say I saw this harmless conceit very fairly taken out of him. We found our fox one day—and let those who know the country follow me—at Walton Wood, Sir John Mordaunt's, and passing over the fine lordship of Light Thorn, Long Itchington, and Ufton, killed him at Watergall House, about a mile and a half from Southam. And who saw him killed ! Mr. Hawkes, on Feather-legs, for he rode him that day ? Not he, indeed ; he, as well as a very large field, with the exception of three, was beaten out of sight, for the last four miles. "*Now then, Mr. Hawkes*," said Mr. Robert Canning to him, in my hearing, when he came up, raising his voice to its highest pitch, "CAN WARWICKSHIRE SHOW A RUN ?" A finer than this could not be seen, for we had but two momentary checks, and after the first mile all over grass. Such a day as this always produces anecdotes that amuse. There was a very hard riding gentleman out, and unfortunately for him, but still more so for his horse—on a new purchase. "A superior horse," said he to me, at the first check, and certainly he went quite in front. Five miles farther—checked again, in the middle of a large cow-pasture. "Superior horse, by G—d," said my friend, patting him on the neck, and appearing delighted ; "Don't be in a hurry," I observed, "it is not over yet ;" in fact, I spoke from appearances : I had just heard him rap the top bar of a stile in rather an alarming manner, and there were other symptoms—the bobbing tail, rolling eye, &c.—not often fallacious. However, to the pith of the story of "the superior horse." On my asking what was become of Mr. —, as we were counting noses at the finish, a good sportsman, now no more, observed, that he had seen him, about six miles back, leading the "superior horse" in a green lane. Now I don't believe this was a bad hunter, at a fair pace over a country ; but this gentleman had one of the best mares in England at that time (by No Pretender), and he measured the powers of his new purchase by her's. But whoever had a bad No Pretender horse ?

As a hunting country, Warwickshire ranks third. With some, this point has been disputed ; but that it *once was* the third-best hunting Country in England, no sportsman, who knows it, can deny. Look first at its dimensions :—It commenced at Hooknorton, just on the confines of Oxfordshire, and ended at the town of Birmingham. So much for its length, at least forty miles. In breadth, say from Woolford Wood to Ladbroke, within two miles of Southam, not less than



JOHN CORBET, Esq., AND HIS FOXHOUNDS. WAR-
WICKSHIRE HUNT. *From a painted banner by* RICHARD
WOODMAN, 1828, *after a picture painted by* THOMAS
WEAVER in 1812. *The present is a Mass. version.*

twenty-five. It comprises a very large tract of grass-land, little inferior to that of Leicestershire, and bordering on almost the finest part of Northamptonshire. It is a practicable country to ride over, although a well-trained hunter is essential ; it is not subject to be flooded ; and though the rivers Avon and Stour run through part of it, foxes very seldom cross them. The Stour is jumpable in some places, and fordable in many ; and the brooks not generally wide—the Ladbroke and Walton perhaps the widest.

Mr. Warde once hunted Warwickshire previously to his taking Northamptonshire, and was succeeded by John Corbet, Esq. of Sundorne Castle, Shropshire, who hunted it upwards of twenty years. It was during his (Mr. Corbet's) time that Warwickshire flourished. The country was then entire, possessing, independently of what is called the open part of it, decidedly the second-best Woodlands in the world, for hounds and sportsmen.

There might perhaps be better sportsmen than Mr. Corbet, but he was eminently gifted for the situation of Master of fox-hounds. He was a very highly-finished gentleman of the old school—preferable, some say, to the new one ; polite to every one, but never losing sight of his station ; his popularity had no bounds. The gentlemen of the country honoured him ; the yeomanry almost adored him. A vulpecide was not known within ten miles of his hunt.

Mr. Corbet resided near Stratford-on-Avon, during the hunting months, his kennel and stables being in the town. The situation was far from desirable, being almost on the outside of the country, and consequently occasioning additional travelling to the hounds in going to, and returning from, the covers. He had likewise another kennel at Meriden, six miles from Coventry, on the London road, which he occupied when he hunted his Woodlands. His establishment consisted of twenty horses for himself and his men, which were generally purchased from his tenants in Shropshire, as yearlings, and he had hounds sufficient to hunt four days in the week, and sometimes five. His fixtures were always made for three weeks in advance, and they were made with excellent judgment as to the capability of the country, and the convenience of the sportsmen who resided in it. He was one of the first to separate the sexes of hounds in the field, and his pack of bitches were in the highest repute. They seldom missed their fox, for their pace with a scent was a killing one. His huntsman was the noted Will Barrow, one of the cleverest horsemen England ever saw, although, as a huntsman, he has been excelled. His view-holloa was musical and cheering to a degree never surpassed, neither will it ever be forgotten in Warwickshire. Lamentable then is it to relate, that after hunting a pack of fox-hounds for upwards of twenty years, and never many hundred yards from their sterns, in chase, this gallant horseman and trusty

servant, broke his neck in the service of the present Mr. Corbet, whilst hunting his pack of harriers, having been handsomely provided for by his late worthy master in his will.

Mr. Corbet did not shine as a rider to hounds. He was afraid of fences, and therefore never rode straight ; but he was remarkable for his knowledge of the country, and the points his foxes made ; and as he rode good horses and feared not to push them to their speed, he frequently made his appearance to the surprise of those with the hounds—being seldom absent long after the finish. He was “ game to the back bone ; ” and delighted in showing sport to his field. In short, he was every thing that a master of fox-hounds should be, barring the lack of more nerve in the saddle. Like the view-holloa of his huntsman, his good-humoured laugh was delightful ; nor, under any circumstances, was the well-bred gentleman laid aside.

Before we state what Warwickshire now is, it is necessary to say what Warwickshire once was. In Mr. Corbet’s time there was a club of gentlemen at Stratford-on-Avon, remarkable for conviviality and concord. During the many years it existed, a quarrel was unheard of amongst its members ; and every other Thursday it was cheered by the presence of Mr. Corbet. The Hunt was also then in possession of its Woodlands, since divided among others ; neither must the gay doings at Meriden be passed over, during the residence of the hounds in that kennel, for the purpose of hunting those Woodlands. This took place twice a year, and brilliant sport was the result. Many who read this will remember the Long Meadow, Princethorpe, the Tile Hill, the Combe, and the Braunston foxes, and the fine wild sporting countries they so often led them over ! Nor can the music of Will Barrow, with his cap in his hand, which rang through those noble woods, whilst his pack were bristling to their game, be ever forgotten by those who were so fortunate as to hear it. All now called the Dunchurch country then belonged to the Warwickshire hunt, including, among many others, the Woods of Lords Craven and Denbigh, and that fine furze-cover called Debdale, the property of that staunch old sportsman, Sir Theophilus Biddulph, of Birdingbury, the whole of which was given up to Lord Anson, on Lord Middleton succeeding to Mr. Corbet.

Modern Warwickshire, however, as we may term it, is not destitute of Woodlands, so essential to all hunting countries. Independently of Weston Park, Snitterfield Bushes, the immense woods of the Marquis of Hertford, and Ansty Wood, the property of that firm friend to fox-hunting, Sir Edward Smythe of Shropshire ; Spernal Park, and Alveston Pastures are always well-stocked with foxes, and afford excellent cub-hunting. The Marquis of Hertford was no fox-

hunter, but his good taste induced him not to be inimical to the sport, and his woods at Ragley, the most extensive in the county, are good nurseries for foxes. Neither should the kindness of his neighbour, Sir George Throckmorton, be forgotten in these days of selfish consideration for game preserving.

We hear and read of runs of twenty miles from point to point,—but they are runs of rare occurrence. In Mr. Corbet's time a fox broke from Woolford Wood, and taking a line never before taken by Warwickshire foxes, was killed near the town of Cheltenham, a distance of full twenty-five miles. Of a very large field of well-mounted sportsmen only seven were in at the death ; and so brilliant was the performance of the pack considered in those days, that the head of the victim is to this hour preserved in a glass-case, and ornaments the room at Stratford-on-Avon, which the Warwickshire club occupied, accompanied by a description of the run.

The prime part of Warwickshire lies eastward of the Avon, bordering on the county of Northampton.

Foxes found in Long Itchington, Kineton, Chesterton, Ufton, Lighthorn, Ladbroke or Watergall parishes, have as fine a country before them as any man would wish to ride over, being for the most part grass, and the enclosures sufficiently extensive. Woolford Wood, Preston Bushes, Idlecot, Alveston Pastures, Farnborough, and indeed all the gorse covers in their neighbourhood, are capable of showing splendid runs—foxes sometimes taking up the hills into Oxfordshire ; often to Edgehill or Epwell, and now and then into the Duke of Beaufort's country. In Lord Middleton's time a remarkable instance of this occurred. A fox in the Warwickshire Vale ascended the Oxfordshire hills at an almost unprecedented pace, and was run to earth at Ditchley Park, not more than twelve miles from Oxford. Of a field of more than a hundred and fifty horsemen, only two (Lord Molyneux and Mr. John Lucey) were able to get to the end of the run, and several good horses fell a sacrifice to the distance and pace.

It was, I believe, admitted among the sportsmen of his day, that there was no better judge of hounds and the breeding of them than Mr. Corbet ; Colonel Cook, in his "Observations on Fox-hunting," thus speaks of him. "I cannot say I admired Mr. Corbet's hounds *in kennel* ; it was nothing but Trojan, Trojan, Trojan." Now we all know there have been miracles among men, and I really believe from all I have heard of him that Trojan was a miracle among hounds, showing such a superiority as one animal very rarely shows over another of the same species. That Mr. Corbet may have bred too much from his justly esteemed favourite and his sons, is but a natural supposition ; but that the descendants of Trojan *in the field*, were, for the most part, true line-hunting hounds, and good

to the end of the day, my own experience confirms. Colonel Cook, indeed, although he prefers the style of Sir Richard Puleston's hounds to Mr. Corbet's, confesses that the sport afforded by the latter was excellent. The Colonel also adds, which I think I before asserted, that during his (Mr. Corbet's) reign in Warwickshire, such a thing as a blank day was totally unknown.

To praise a man for conduct really deserving of praise, is but a tribute due to him. I must not, however, dwell on the merits of this renowned sportsman, or, as Cicero expressed himself when alluding to the virtues of Pompey, I shall find it more difficult to know when to stop than how to begin. I shall only repeat, that he left behind him a title to the gratitude of the sporting world, and an example most worthy of imitation by all masters of hounds. In short, we may exclaim with the poet—

“Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.”

The enclosures of Warwickshire are, for the most part, of a fair size—particularly in the grazing districts, which I should estimate at one-third of the whole extent of country. Taking it as a whole, I consider the soil very favourable to scent, as the staple is generally good. A great portion of the ploughed lands, however, are very tender after hard frosts succeeded by rains ; and Warwickshire may be termed a deep country to ride over, and one which requires strong and well-bred horses. A great many such are annually bred in the county, and it always has been the pride of Warwickshire yeomen to have a good hunter or two in their stables, a species of stock that has, on the whole, paid them well for rearing.

The fences of Warwickshire are of course of various descriptions, but, with the exception of the Meriden Woodlands, now partly dissevered from the country, they are seldom placed on banks. Quickset hedges, with a ditch only on one side, are the general obstacles to be encountered ; and in the grazing districts, from the richness of the soil, they equal in strength the often described “bull-finches” of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. What are called bullock-fences are likewise not uncommon in Warwickshire,—that is to say—a good stiff rail accompanying the hedge and ditch. Timber fences perpetually occur, either in the shape of stiles, or rails affixed in weak parts of the quickset fences, to which a ditch is always added, as a further security against trespass. Brooks likewise abound, as they do in all rich vales, but the greater part of them come under the denomination of *brooklings*, and few of either are sufficient to stop a well-mounted sportsman, willing to get to hounds.

In the year 1812 Mr. Corbet's health rather gave way, and though, as before observed, “game to the bone,” the fatigue of a constant attendance on his hounds, was considered too severe for a constitution already impaired by time. At the

earnest entreaties of his family then, he consented to break up his hunting establishment at that period, and was succeeded by Lord Middleton of Wollaton Hall, near Nottingham, who gave him twelve hundred guineas for his hounds, consisting of more than seventy couples. His Lordship accompanied his cheque for the money by a note expressive of his obligation for the offer Mr. Corbet made him of his pack, giving him to understand that he considered the transaction more in the light of a gift than a purchase.

On the balance, as the betting men say, Warwickshire was a loser by this change, although I am ready to admit some alterations for the better were accomplished. In one very essential respect, however, Lord Middleton was the very reverse of his predecessor. He was somewhat haughty in his demeanour, and consequently unpopular with the farmers, who had been accustomed to the mild and gentleman-like carriage of Mr. Corbet. In short, it can scarcely be doubted that Lord Middleton ruined Warwickshire as a hunting country, for he destroyed the club at Stratford, he divided the country with others, and gave up the second-best woodlands in England. On the other hand it may be admitted, that he did the thing in good style, (but what cannot such a purse as his was do?) and in spite of a miserable tool as a huntsman, his hounds afforded sport. Perhaps a season or two during his reign may be produced as showing a brilliant succession of runs, unequalled by any hounds of the time.

Lord Middleton made one grand mistake, but here he followed the example of his predecessor. He purchased a house in the suburbs of Stratford-on-Avon, where he built a large range of stables and kennels without considering that the site of them was on the very outside of his country. Nothing, however, could exceed the convenience of these premises as related to hounds and horses, nor the comfortable arrangement of the house. Perhaps the dining-room was, for its size, one of the most complete rooms in England, and its furniture of the richest description. But alas, what a change! It is now the school-room of what is called a young lady's seminary. The paddocks in which the hounds were exercised in the winter, and his lordship's hunters soiled in the summer, are now covered with cottages, presenting a dismal appearance to those who remembered this place in its glory. "*Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

Lord Middleton hunted Warwickshire nine or ten years, and it is but just to say he was a sportsman. Perhaps in his judgment of *the dog*, in its varieties, he has been very rarely excelled, particularly as related to spaniels, of which his breed has been supposed to be unequalled in England. Indeed, as compared with any others which had come under my observation, there is a superiority about them for blood and bone, which I did not believe to have existed. For greyhounds,

his lordship has been also celebrated ; and to sum up all, setting temper aside, few men had more requisites for keeping fox-hounds than Lord Middleton. He afterwards went into Nottinghamshire, on Mr. Musters resigning that country ; and with his accustomed magnificence, was very soon in possession of one hundred couples of hounds—having given Mr. Osbaldeston a thousand guineas for ten couples of his ; but his Lordship's health, however, not permitting him to partake largely of his favourite diversion, which, out of respect to him, as a sportsman, every brother sportsman must regret, he soon afterwards resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Dansey, some time master of the Herefordshire hounds.

The cause of Lord Middleton giving up Warwickshire, was a fall from his favourite horse, Billy Button, and he was succeeded in 1822 by Evelin John Shirley, Esq. of Ealington Hall, near Shipston-on-Stour, who, to his credit be it spoken, took the hounds until some other owner for them could be found, he himself, although a regular attendant in the field, having no inclination for command. His highly accomplished manners, however, added to the great worth of his character, rendered it a highly popular measure in Warwickshire, and, assisted by the celebrated Jack Wood as his huntsman, the reputation of the pack rather increased than suffered in his hands. He mounted his men in capital style, as the sale of his horses at Tattersall's proved ; and during his time, the attendance on the hounds was even larger than in that of his predecessor.

To remedy the inconvenience I have spoken of, respecting the ill-judged situation of the Stratford-on-Avon kennel, Lord Middleton had a temporary one in the beautiful village of Kenilworth, lying between Warwick and Coventry ; in Mr. Shirley's time, a new one was erected at Butler's Marston between Wellesburne and Kineton, a situation which commanded all the covers in the country, excepting some distant woodlands, when the hounds slept at Kenilworth.

In 1824, Mr. Shirley was succeeded by Mr. Hay of Dunse Castle, Scotland, who, making Wood his kennel huntsman, hunted the hounds himself. Mr. Hay did the thing with great spirit, for a more zealous sportsman never yet drew breath. His stud was excellent, and he rode admirably to his hounds, but his reputation as a huntsman might have been greater, at least so said the judges. However, on the whole, he gave abundant satisfaction, and his relinquishment of the country was regretted.

Warwickshire was now doomed to undergo another change. In 1827, Mr. Fellowes followed Mr. Hay in the management of these hounds, having long been resident in Warwickshire, where he had proved himself a sportsman, in the fullest acceptance of that word. He continued Wood as his huntsman, but being wanting a little in that spirit which is so essential to all masters of fox-hounds, and

particularly in Warwickshire, there was somewhat of flatness in the concern during his reign, and in 1830 he resigned. Mr. Russell, nephew to the Duke of Bedford, then became master of the hounds. He was a good judge of hunting, and particularly gentleman-like in his demeanour ; though some say that his men might have been better mounted, or at all events on horses better adapted to the country ; Wood's retirement, which then took place, was severely felt in the country.

It is well known that neither Mr. Corbet nor Lord Middleton received any subscription to the hounds that hunted Warwickshire. It commenced when Mr. Shirley became master of them, and amounted to nearly two thousand pounds per annum, paid punctually to a day.

In Mr. Corbet's time, the commencement of the season was ushered in after a manner not unworthy of notice, and still more worthy of imitation. By the first Monday in November, the gentlemen composing the club assembled at Stratford-on-Avon ; and on that day, the late Lord Willoughby de Broke of Compton Varney, gave a dinner to the master of the hounds, and a numerous party of sportsmen then resident in the neighbourhood, in commemoration of the opening of the season. This highly respected nobleman of the old school is dead ; but the present lord, although no fox-hunter, is an excellent friend to fox-hunting. His lordship, however, was not without a little music in his kennel, having been master of a clever pack of harriers now given up. The late Earl of Aylesford of Packington Hall, near Meriden, was also a staunch ally of Mr. Corbet. The present Earl is a good preserver of foxes, and although his taste does not often lead him into the field, he now and then takes a look at hounds, and has the character of being a bold and determined horseman.

The Earl of Clonmel was, for many years, one of the firmest supporters of the Warwickshire hunt. During Mr. Corbet's time he resided at Alvesley near Coventry, from which place, although great was the distance he generally had to ride, he was scarcely ever absent from a cover likely to show sport. His lordship during Lord Middleton's occupation of the country, resided at Weston House, near Shipston-on-Stour, once the property of the much honoured Colonel Sheldon, where his hospitality towards his brother sportsmen was proverbial.

The Earl of Warwick must not be omitted. Before he married, and previous to his father's decease—then Lord Broke—he was a regular attendant on the Warwickshire hounds, and rode in the first rank, but marriage spoiled him for a sportsman. His Lordship has since been rather slow, nevertheless he continues a staunch friend to the sport.

Mr. West of Alscot Park, near Stratford-on-Avon, of racing celebrity, had a strong claim on the gratitude of this hunt. His estate was long a nursery for

foxes, *as well as game* ; and from Preston Bushes, how many good runs have been seen ! The cover is excellently situated, no other being very near it, and in a fine country for scent. To Mr. Holbech of Farnborough, also, were the gentlemen of Warwickshire not a little indebted, as well as to Mr. Tomes of Southam—the owner of the celebrated Itchington Heath cover—Sir John Mordaunt, &c. The late Sir John Mordaunt was conspicuous as a rider as well as a sportsman, and his son, the present baronet, treads closely in his steps. His property lies in the very centre of the hunt. “ Grave as a judge,” was once a proverb in England, but time and “ the march ” have nearly destroyed its value, the wisdom being no longer in the wig. The Serjeant Goulburn of the present day, brother to the Ex-minister of that name, was a conspicuous character in Warwickshire in Mr. Corbet’s time. He is a better lawyer than he was a sportsman, but he was a valuable acquisition to the Stratford-on-Avon hunt. They were the days of his youth ; and nothing loth, he yielded to the allurements which England holds out to that delight-giving period. Like the great Lord Erskine, he had been a soldier and a sailor. He had race-horses and hunters, and so had others. But he had—what but few possess—*the talent to amuse beyond his fellows*. In short, he was the charm of society wheresoever he entered into it ; for, although by nature a satirist, he sought but to amuse, and if pain was given, the remedy was at hand by the same means by which the wound was inflicted. A poem, written by him, called Epwell Hunt, descriptive of a run he saw with Mr. Corbet’s hounds—somewhat in the style of the famous Billesdon Coplow song—was an admirable performance as a real picture of the passing scene, and if I am not much mistaken, will outlive the best of his judicial orations.

The town of Stratford-on-Avon, the head quarters of the Warwickshire hunt, has little to recommend it, save a handsome church and bridge, and excellent accommodations for sportsmen, at the inns. The house in which Shakespeare was born is still standing, and reminds us of a pleasing feature in ancient history. Alexander the Great destroyed the town of Thebes ; but such was his respect for the immortal Pindar, that he ordered the house in which he had lived to be preserved from the general wreck, and all that remained of his family from the dreadful effects of his vengeance.

Warwickshire has always been in good repute as a sporting country, and remarkable for producing what may be termed a breed of sportsmen, not confined to hunting, but possessing a taste for every variety of field sports. To this circumstance may be attributed the very excellent understanding that has existed between the gentlemen and the yeomanry, and it also accounts for that strict preservation of foxes for which it has so long been conspicuous. The yeomanry

of Warwickshire, however, are for the most part an enlightened race of men, and therefore superior to the selfish consideration that induces some persons to destroy an animal that may afford amusement to hundreds residing in the same county with themselves, because the possibility exists of a lamb or a chicken being their loss. But, from the pen of a sportsman, too much praise cannot be bestowed on English yeomen in general, to whom hunting is so mainly indebted ; and indeed justice has been done them by an eminent poet and sportsman, who thus honourably characterizes them :

“ England’s peculiar and appropriate sons
Known in no other land. Each boasts his hearth
And field as free as the best lord his barony,
Owing subjection to no human vassalage,
Save to their king and law. Hence are they resolute,
Leading the van on every day of battle,
As men who know the blessings they defend,
Hence are they frank and generous in peace,
As men who have their portion in its plenty.
*No other kingdom shows such worth and happiness
Veil’d in such low estate.”*

For bold and good riders has Warwickshire also been pre-eminent. In the time of Mr. Corbet and Lord Middleton, those nonpareils, the Messrs. Canning, were in their prime.

Warwickshire could also boast of producing one other *native* horseman, such as has been rarely excelled in the art of riding to hounds. This gentleman’s name was Wyatt, and—another son of Hercules—six feet three inches would not take the measure of him from top to toe. He was for many years after the Cannings began to decline, quite the leading man in Warwickshire, and those who have witnessed his performance can never forget the brilliant and straightforward style in which he rode to his hounds.

Before I quit Warwickshire, I will look round and see who comes into my list from that quarter. There is Mr. Holloway—the well known Ben Holloway—to begin with, and who can better lead the way ? I think I have known this good horseman upwards of thirty years, and the last time I saw him with hounds he appeared in his old place, “ close to their tails,” as Matty Wilkinson says. I make him a Warwickshire man here, but he has chiefly hunted in Oxfordshire, although he lived some years in the former county. He is a good judge of hunters, rides light, and with good hands. Mr. Holland has also much distinguished himself over Warwickshire in the last ten years. All those who saw, as I did, that fine run with Mr. Hay, from Light-thorn-rough to the Edge-hills, can speak to his excellent performance on that day. But he is a hard and good rider. I call

Mr. Hay a capital horseman. In fact, no man need ride better than he did, in every one's opinion, when his hounds hunted Warwickshire—very straightforward and very quick. Mr. Handford, a nephew of Mr. Lockley's, although a Worcestershire man, has often shown in Warwickshire, but go where he would he always shone. He was six feet high, and nearly sixteen stone, but who could beat him over rough countries, on his Black horse, or on Ready? Indeed, although I cannot remember time and place, he saw them all out once with the Black, with Lord Segrave's hounds—His lordship tempted him with an offer of four hundred guineas for his horse; but he stood firm, and I honour him for the act; for it was a great price in the provincials. Now what shall I say of the late Parson Hancox, so many years in Warwickshire, and one of the best horsemen there? Why, he did not see one run in ten. Yet who handled a horse better? Who put him to his fences in a more workmanlike style? I answer, no one; and yet, owing to having a bad eye to hounds, and persisting in taking what he called a line of his own, his general fate was to be beaten. Speaking of him as a horseman, however, he was decidedly a good one.

But I have not done with Warwickshire yet. Æsop's cock found a gem on a dunghill—though he had much rather have found a corn. Of the lowest cast of human kind, was Bradley's *Harry*—"hunter-making Harry"—and as I shall never light upon his fellow again, I must indulge myself with a few words about him. I believe I have already stated, that about three days with hounds completed the education of a hunter, whilst under the tuition and guidance of this master of arts. But what great amusement was he the author of, independently of the delight which his gallant performance afforded us—going well upon a raw one, and no doubt very often on a bad one. Conceive a gentleman "*wanting to buy a horse*," as the phrase is, keeping an eye upon Harry—not nine stone, with his saddle—riding apparently at his ease, and topping every thing that came in his way, and every now and then "*going in and out clever*," at the doubles. The horse is bought, but mark the change! Six stone more weight (perhaps) with an awkward hand and a wash-ball seat, convert this clever, newly wrought hunter, and certain fencer, into a rushing, uncertain, and dangerous devil, and an appeal to the *liberality* of Mr. Bradley was next day the result:—"What shall I give you to take him back?" The answer to this (*toujours la même*) I have already given; but I have chuckled when I have overheard something like the following conversation between a customer and Harry:

Customer.—Well, Harry, that horse has carried you well to-day.

Harry.—A capital hunter, sir: *the best I think, I ever rid.*

Customer.—He seems to leap very well.

Harry.—He never makes no mistake, sir.

Customer.—Does he pull?

Harry.—Lord! no, sir; a child might ride him.

Customer.—Does he rush at his fences?

Harry.—He wants driving, sir.

Customer.—Do you think he would carry me?

Harry.—(Casting his gallows eye over his person). He'll just carry your weight. You'd beat every man in Warwickshire on him.

Here was generally the clincher—the horse was sold. But speaking seriously, it admits of a question, whether, all things considered, this lad was not *the best natural horseman over a country the world ever produced*. Picture to yourself for a moment the office of this boy, rough rider—over so strong a country as Warwickshire, in which every description of fence is met with—to a dealer who sold more hunters than any man at that time in England, and a great proportion of them after having been almost initiated by Harry. But such was the firm seat, good hand, and undaunted nerve of this youth, that he seldom got falls, and I never knew him kill more than one horse in the field, who broke his back at a fence. Of course he was often in scrapes, but his coolness gave his horses time to get out of them. I remember once—both our horses beat—coming up with him to some rails, and no other place for choice. “Now, Harry,” said I; “*you or I?*” Harry went, and alighted across the rails. Sitting very coolly however he thus addressed his horse. “D—n your *sleepy* eyes, what are you about?” when the top rail breaking, his horse struggled out. But I know not which was the best, Harry or his master, take them for every thing. Bradley himself was as quick as lightning, and if he liked his horse, and thought any one else liked him too, it must have been something terrific to have turned him from his point, and he was the best seller in his trade, where eloquence is always wanting. In fact he was once thus addressed by an ex-member of the Commons. “I sat in Parliament some time,” said he, “for which I paid £10,000, but I never heard any one talk *so much to his purpose as you do*.”

The New Forest is not the place to look for specimens of bruising riders, as they are called, but horsemanship is wanted in all countries, and particularly when a man rides twenty stone. I was much pleased with Mr. Harbin's performance over that rough surface, and when I was told he turned that weight in the scale, was astonished at seeing him standing up in his stirrups, *à la* Chifney; having his horse fast by the head in a plain snaffle bridle, and going a slapping pace. It is, however, still more extraordinary that he should have ridden a confirmed glandered horse for four seasons, and that he should have afterwards recovered a

sound state of health. But, after all, what is there in a twenty stone man galloping over an open country when compared with one deprived of an arm, riding well up to hounds in a country stiffly enclosed? I allude to the late Captain Harvey of the Royal Artillery, a regular welter, *with only one arm*, having left the other at Waterloo. It is impossible for any person to go better on the cattle he rode, than this gallant Irishman did, and I am quite sure the sun never shone on the man who would have ridden over a fence that he would not have attempted. In fact he fairly planted Lord Derby's huntsman, Jonathan, on his famous horse, Prosper. He rode four times at it, but Prosper would not have it. His activity in opening gates (that he did not ride over) and removing other obstructions to his progress, with the one hand he had left—assisted now and then by his teeth—was almost past belief; and the gaiety with which he rode over a country, under such appalling disadvantages, was, to me, quite delightful. But to what a sad end did this gallant Irishman and noble fellow come! Inflammation after bleeding, attacked the remaining limb; he was told nothing but amputation of it would save his life. "I will die then," said he; "for what can I do without either arm?" I can only say, as there was not a Ceres to have replaced his limbs, there should have been a bard to have sung his fame. These things, however, are forgotten:—

"Stern sons of war! sad Wilfred sighed,
Behold the boast of Roman pride!
What now of all *your* toils are known?
A grassy trench, a broken stone."

But is it not extraordinary that there should be three one-arm sportsmen, and *all hard riders, in schedule H.*? Of Sir Thomas Harris I have seen nothing in the field; but he sits his horse like a workman. Captain Healy, I noticed in my Yorkshire Tour, quoting the Harrowvian words of young Graham (Sir Bellingham's second son), "How devilishly that one-armed fellow rides!" He was brother to one of the best men in Yorkshire, Major Healy, whose reputation as a rider is too well-known for much to be said about it. Nim North called him *the Lasher*, at least such, he says, was the name by which he was distinguished in Mr. Lambton's hunt. But we have often heard of the Major, on Hard-bargain. In the same county was Mr. James Hall, of Scarboro, five miles from Beverley, one of the best of the Holderness men, and who has, I believe, shown himself now and then in Leicestershire. Mr. Harland, likewise in Mr. Lambton's hunt, was one of the best performers, and was neatly mounted and appointed when I was in the north. Nim North indeed speaks of him as being "always in his place." He was likely to be so, for he paid attention to the condition of his horses in the summer. But

we must not pass over Lord Hopetoun, whom I saw going well in Holderness. He was a great weight, and a bruising rider.

All the Hills, in Shropshire, ride well, and I know not which to begin with. I am old enough to remember Mr. John Hill, Lord Hill's eldest brother, who once hunted Shropshire, a capital man over a country—as I believe his father, old Sir John, as they called him, was before him. I never saw him (Sir John) in the field, but I got a little fortune by two colts out of one of his cast-off hunters, who produced a thousand pounds' worth of horse-flesh in a very few years. Some of the old Snap blood, no doubt, though her pedigree was unknown. Tom Hills, huntsman to the Surrey, pleased me much. He was a powerful horseman, with excellent judgment and rare pluck. I shall not soon forget (indeed I am proud to remember) an hour we had together with his hounds over the Godstone Vale—a sticky and stiff one, as I ever rode over ; nor the answer that I hear he once made to a cockney (Nodding Homer, I believe) who asked him whether he was not afraid to ride the small thorough-bred horse he was then on ? “ Oh, no,” replied Tom ; “ he dares not fall with me, for he knows I should crush him into the earth, if he did.” Will Head, a brother huntsman, to the Cheshire (a pupil of Sir Bellingham's, having whipped-in to him), was also a very neat rider, and in a tussle for victory between three rival packs, and of course as many rival huntsmen, a few years back over Cheshire, Will got the brush. But he *ought* to have been the cock of his own walk, and the race was over Cheshire. It is a rare country to teach a man the use of the left hand—so much off-and-on work, with those narrow crops, and deep ditches. In short, old Chute's butler, with his spade, would be useful there, if any where.

I am now breaking the H's to a hend, as the Shropshire people say. Mr. Frederick Heysham—a Hampshire man—would go in any country, being a firm and good horseman, with pluck equal to any thing. I believe I once said of him that he had no objection to a newly white-painted gate, at any time of the day, and that is saying enough on the score of nerve. Sir William Hoste is dead and gone, but who that ever saw him ride—and he was well known in Leicestershire—might not have allowed that “ *fas est ab Hoste doceri* ” ? Of Tom Heycock, the Leicestershire grazier, I need say nothing, the shop windows having shown him up. He was a Lord Lonsdale's man, always conspicuous, and once or twice has been noticed in letters from Melton, as being “ among the few who had the best of it, during the fastest parts of the run.” But am I about to forget Joe Harrison, that brilliant fellow over a country, when he whipped-in to Lord Sefton, Lord Foley, and I believe Mr. Assheton Smith ? Oh no, for he was a clipper ; as hard as flint, and a *finished* horseman as well. He looked the whipper-in to a T, but

no dandy. He never talked to me of "the *interesting* parts" of a run (curse your refinements) as a modern whip lately did. "A capital thing to-day, Joe," said I to him once. "I know'd how 'twould be, sir," he replied, "arter the first five minutes : *there was nothing for me to do*. I never see'd hounds cluster together so in all my born days. And how our master did ride surely!! I thought the old horse must have stopped with him." He was a capital man with hounds. As Yankee Rush says of Brougham, "a word told like a blow." But by all that is good, I have left out one of the best of the "gemmen," as Joe would call him—I mean Mr. Harrison, of Shelswell, Oxfordshire, whom I remember one of the best over that hard country. He was always splendidly mounted, but when I state that two hundred guineas was with him a common price for a leader, it is no wonder he would give five hundred for a hunter. He was likewise an excellent race-rider, and once out-jockeyed me over his own course (the Cottesford) for the Cottesford Heath Stakes.



CHAPTER VII



LONG sounding as the vowel *I* is, it produces me a short list. One of the best men England ever saw, however, over the strongest country in the world, was Mr. Vere Isham, of Lamport, Northamptonshire, brother to the baronet of that name. Mr. Isham was my senior at Rugby school, and take him on all sorts of horses, he was quite deserving the encomium I have passed upon him. He was nothing but a good one ; and to prove this assertion, it is only necessary to say that he was in the habit of purchasing horses other men were obliged to give up—and this in a country where good fencers are considered indispensable. But let him buy what he might, they yielded at last to his fine hand and temper. I generally saw him on a low but lengthy animal, well-bred and thick; and I liked to see him charging those Northamptonshire “stoppers,” in his fearless manner. His brother Henry was likewise a good horseman, but not such a flyer as Mr. Vere. His neighbour, Mr. Isted of Ecton, was a very hard rider, and an enthusiastic admirer of hounds.

There is only one man that I have wished had been smothered in the birth, and that is he who mixed *I* with the *J*, and *U* with the *V*, in the Dictionaries. But suppose Lord Jersey had been stifled in the birth ! Why, if he had, we should have lost not only one of the hardest, boldest, and most judicious, but perhaps *the most elegant* rider to hounds the world ever saw. In his best days—those of Mr. Meynell—(when Lord Villiers) he was not to be beaten either by hounds or by man ; on the contrary, there are tales on record touching his lordship, that lead one to believe he was one of the few of those times who were too fast for the hounds even over that fast shire. I allude to his having been now and then heard to exclaim in a run—“Curse these hounds, what a bore they are ! they

can't get from under one's horse's feet." But all the Villiers's were dashing fellows,—"prodigal of their persons," writes Clarendon. Lord Jersey, however, so far took care of himself as always to ride horses more than equal to his weight, and he has been very careful in selecting them. I remember his two famous black horses, which he rode when Lord Villiers; but not correctly enough to describe them: nor do I now recollect the exact sum which he either refused for, or sold them at. But several of the splendid animals his lordship has ridden, in the last twenty-five years, such as Grimsthorpe, Cecil, and others, are now in my mind's eye, and they were equal to much more than Lord Jersey's weight.

From an Earl to a huntsman is but a step—particularly so in this line, for the one cannot distinguish himself without the other. Neither am I one who, because I have been in the "swell" countries, and seen most of the crack performers in them, am blind to the merits of a man because the field in which he displays them happens to be within a dozen miles of London. *Jonathan*,* then, (I forget his surname) Lord Derby's late huntsman, comes next on my list. But when I was in Surrey, the cry was—"look at the horses Jonathan rides, and then look at his weight." No matter for that; a bad workman never has good tools, and Prosper, Milo, The Baker, and Paddy,—his favourites,—owed much of their superiority, as hunters, to Jonathan's fine hand. To be sure he was but as a cock-sparrow on their backs; but I am bound to say he was all over a workman, and as cheerful a fellow to ride across a country with, as I ever got alongside of. No man could put a horse better or quicker at a fence—a certain proof of finger. However, he has taken his last leap, and rather before his time, though I fear this may have arisen from two causes. First, he kept a public-house, a dangerous calling for a man with a *soul*, for it is sure to become a wet one; and, secondly, it is said there has been more good ale drunk in Knowsley servants' hall, than in that of any other nobleman in England. But poor Jonathan's days were no doubt shortened by gout.

Although "Mrs. Jones" is not in good odour, that is no reason why the Mister Jones's may not be top-sawyers. Let me see—where shall I go for a good one? Why, a long way back; to the late Mr. Roznon Jones of Gloucestershire, and his brother Edward, since residing at the family seat. In my early days, the former of these gentlemen was considered a first-rate rider, and was still more celebrated as a superior judge of a hunter; and when I say that his name alone sold one in Leicestershire—he being unable to ride him one single day—for seven hundred guineas, I say enough. Having, however, spoken of him as something out of the common way as a horseman, I shall be expected to bring some proof; and it will

* Griffin.—ED.



THE EARL OF JERSEY, A GREAT MELTONIAN. *From a Lithograph by "H.B." (JOHN DOYLE). Collection of General Cosvie.*

be found in the history and exploits of one of his horses, which he rode many seasons—I should be inclined to say, a dozen. He was an immense, thorough-bred gelding, by the late Duke of Bedford's Halkin—certainly the largest-limbed thorough-bred one I ever saw ; with only one eye ; a very hard puller, and a very uncertain fencer. Such, however, were his powers, that with the fine hand of his owner, he very rarely fell, and *never knew distress*. In dirt, his action was superb, and to sum up all, Lord Sefton pronounced him the finest sample of a hunter he ever saw. But Mr. Jones paid too dearly for the conspicuous place this horse could put him into, with hounds, for his hard pulling, for so many successive seasons, injured his spine, and shortened his days. Were it allowable to go once more into the hare-hunting field for a fine horseman, I could say something of a brother of the last-mentioned eminent sportsman, who hunted his father's harriers, for many years, in an almost super-excellent form, and in a very deep vale ; but all these Jones's could ride, and the Colonel of the Horse Artillery was once in great repute as a jockey. I never saw him in the field. Mr. Jones of Brackley—no relation to the foregoing—well known in Mr. Drake's and the Duke of Grafton's hunts, is a very quick and good man over a country. I saw Mr. Jenner (of Berkeley) two seasons in Leicestershire. He made a good start, but rather slackened pace after the first year, in consequence of a smashing fall. Sir Frederick Johnstone has made his debut since my time, but from what I hear of him, he is a good one.

May I be permitted to call a man John, and nothing else but John, for on my soul I cannot recollect his other name? Nevertheless I have to call attention to a first-rate artist, over a cramped country, John (something), who many years hunted the Ludlow subscription fox-hounds, and with whom I have crossed many a rough dale, and many a punishing hill. But all who knew the country these hounds hunted, are aware that it abounds with every description of fence that the ingenuity of a clod-hopper can devise, and more especially with those called doubles—the second ditch being often to be taken from very scanty footing. It was at these cramped places that John's fine finger served him, and I am bound to declare he was not to be excelled in the cool and masterly manner in which he bounded his horses into, and over, them. Let Sir Bellingham Graham speak to one horse of his making, which he, Sir B., called the Ludlow horse, having purchased him from the late Mr. Adams with the hounds. Will. Staples used to ride him, and he told me he was the most expert fencer he ever had to do with. I dare not more than hint at the boy who used to whip-in to John, *on a mule* ; but it was astonishing to behold the places he and his hybrid (not high-bred) hunter would get over, displaying, on the rider's part, some qualities that would have been very serviceable to several of my hard-riding acquaintances, and saved them

scores of falls. I never saw Mr. William Jolliffe with hounds but once, and then he had nothing to do ; but I was told he was one that could go better than most of the provincials.

I cannot begin the eleventh letter of the alphabet—the English kappa—better than with that gallant horseman, Sir Charles Knightley, who once hunted the Pytchley country (Northamptonshire), in which his fine domain is placed. The world never saw a more daring rider, and surely this is saying a great deal, Sir Charles being contemporary with Assheton Smith and other stars of those days. But all who remember his style of getting to hounds will allow that nothing could be more determined, and, in my eyes, nothing more beautiful—I mean amongst the gymnastics. His wishing there was not a bridle-gate in Northamptonshire, could only proceed from such a man mounted on such horses as St. Maronel and Benvolio. In fact, like Shakespeare's hero, Sir Charles might have exclaimed, "What man dare, I dare ;" and his own memorable declaration, that "it is the duty of every man to take care of his health *for the sake of riding to hounds*," proves what an enthusiast *he was*. But alas ! *Nil violentum est perpetuum* ; 'twas soon, soon over. He quitted the field in the prime of his days, with all his honours thick upon him ; and his reason for so doing—at least that which he gave me, when I last saw him with hounds, on a pony—was, that he could not get horses to carry him as he liked to ride. I ventured to tell him that no doubt Benvolios and St. Maronels were scarce, although good hunters were always to be found ; but the remark reminded me of one made many years back by Lord Delamere, although to a far different import. "It must be very difficult," said a youngster to him one day, on seeing thirteen of his stud setting forward for Leicestershire, "to get thirteen such horses as these." "Not at all," replied his lordship—then Mr. Cholmondeley ; "the difficulty is to find the money to buy them." This, however, does not apply to Sir Charles, and where there is the will there is always the way, says the proverb. But I have often amused myself with thinking had Sir Charles been in being in the days of chivalry, what a gallant knight errant he would have made, and it must have been a good man who crossed his lance. At all events, he would have done honour to his order. I hope "the young stock," as Joe Walton calls the heirs apparent, will turn out well. I should add that Sir Charles leaped the gate, near Northampton, on Benvolio, that Mr. Gurney leaped on Sober Robin.

But when we speak of enthusiasts, where is the knight, much less the squire, who could have outdone Lord Kintore on horseback—not "for God and the ladies," as in olden times, but to enable him to be close to his darling hounds, in chase ? I cannot think he has ever yet seen the light ; for, making allowance for the

strongest passions which actuate the human mind, I cannot conceive the daring of any man can carry him further, in a favourite pursuit, than his lordship's zeal has carried him in fox-hunting. The act of travelling a pack of hounds five hundred miles to a better country—to Berkshire—was a trifle. The *furor venaticus*, however, of this sporting nobleman, is visible in every act of his life. See him in a run, how *ecstatic* he is !—pardon me reader, I can think of no other word. How straight he goes ! how he rides at places, not with the expectation, but with the *hope* of getting over them !* But he is as hard as flint. A muddy ditch is a bed of roses to Lord Kintore, provided it be on the same side of the hedge with his hounds. Then mark him in the evening—how joyously he speaks of them ! How his soul is wrapped in the doings of the day, and the anticipations of the morrow ! Perhaps I may add, few men have been better mounted ; and, as a proof that he thought so, he offered Lord Lynedoch four hundred guineas for one horse his lordship had purchased at his sale, and bought in the brother to him at more than three hundred ! Lord Lynedoch afterwards refused eight hundred pounds for his horse, the offer being made for the purpose of his being matched against Clinker, in Lord Kennedy's steeple-chase with Captain Ross.

Had Lord Kintore been born without the silver spoon in his mouth—that is to say, had his lot been cast amongst those who work for their daily bread—if he could not have been a huntsman, he would have been a whipper-in ; if not a whipper-in, a dog-feeder ; if not a dog-feeder, an earth-stopper. By this I mean to imply that his lordship is the most ardent lover of fox-hunting, *for its own sake alone*, that has ever come across my path up to the present period of my life.† And we find the proof of what I assert in the countries he now hunts. In what he calls the home one, I do not know of one man who can be called a sportsman. And they are few and far between in the Turriff country.‡ How often then in the season must Lord Kintore only participate in the pleasures of the chase with his two whippers-in ! Although he laments this, he still “hangs on,” to use his own words ; and no master in Great Britain is more deserving of success.

I greatly admire the *style of hound* Lord Kintore breeds, the result partly of his experience of what that style ought to be to stand work, and partly the result of

* In a run over the Vale of White Horse, Lord Kintore came down upon a fence which he saw no horse could clear. “Hie, you sir, *catch my horse*,” cried he to a countryman on the opposite side, and, riding at, tumbled neck and crop over it.

† It may be remembered that one of the Duke of Cleveland's whippers-in was heard to lament that his lordship's father had not been a huntsman, so that the passion for fox-hunting may be said to run in the blood.

‡ Lord Kintore sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. Dingwall of Bruckley, Aberdeenshire, a very promising young sportsman, who was very prematurely cut off. I had booked him as a future master.

his very correct eye to the good points of all domestic animals, which he has now and then exhibited practically to the world. Then he has a sort of intuitive knowledge of the animal dog, of the fox-hound certainly, which the following fact demonstrates. In the presence of Walker, now huntsman to the Fife (formerly whipper-in to himself), he had the Southwold hounds drawn for his inspection, and then drew them himself, not making more than two mistakes in their names. Scott, Mr. Ramsay's huntsman, told me he never saw his lordship's equal at this difficult task—"a terrible quick man in a kennel, that Lord Kintore," said he to me.

Besides his present countries and Forfarshire, Lord Kintore hunted what is called the Vale of White Horse country, Berkshire (with part of Oxfordshire), in 1826, on the retirement of Mr. Harvey Combe, and hunted it three seasons, with very good success. His quitting it was much lamented by his numerous friends in that sporting part of England, and especially so as he brought away with him a misfortune which he has not been able to rid himself of—the result of his zeal to show them sport. Riding at a sort of impracticable fence he got a fall, the effects of which he feels to this day, and probably will never cease to feel them. That his lordship is also most popular in his present country is not to be wondered at, and the sense of his brother sportsmen on that point was a few years back practically expressed by the presentation to him of a superb piece of plate.

As a huntsman, both in the kennel and the field, I have only to repeat what I have already said of Lord Kintore, that he is both theoretical and practical. His various notes upon hunting denote him the former, and the following anecdote will show his anxiety to avail himself of the observations and experience of others. Wishing to have the benefit of Crane's experience and judgment, when he (Crane) hunted the Fife hounds, he sent him some observations of his own, in manuscript, with the request that he would comment freely upon them, and prefacing what he had written with these words :—"To Thomas Crane, from one who has seen and learnt a little, but who has yet a deal to learn from those who have had longer experience than himself."

In the kennel Lord Kintore shines as a huntsman ; no one understands *condition* better than he does, and in the season he never fails to feed his hounds himself. In the field he is too well known to require more to be said than that although his lordship may be excelled as a huntsman—for he claims not perfection—there is little occasion for a better, and I have had an opportunity of seeing him under trying circumstances. His famous riding, for he will "be with 'em," gives him a great advantage ; and he is not only cool and collected in all his motions with his hounds, but almost fastidious as to the manner in which matters should be carried



JOHN LOCKLEY, ESQ., Father of the Field, Shropshire and Worcestershire, in 1825. *From a mezzotint by THOMAS LUPTON after J. RAMSAY. The print lent by Messrs. Fores. After reading p. 156, see footnote p. 227.*

on. I really believe he had rather see his hounds find and kill one fox in a truly fox-hunting style, than a dozen in a slovenly unworkman-like manner. But hear his own words on this subject. “*I like*,” says his lordship, “a burst of twenty minutes, and I do *admire* a real hunting run of an hour, at a fair holding pace, when every hound does his share of work ; and *then* to find them increasing their pace by degrees, the fox sinking before them, and running at last from scent to view. This is a pleasure to be felt, but not to be conceived.”

The Messrs. Kingscote, brothers, and nephews to Sir Henry Peyton, have done honour to the powers of the horse ; having ridden as hard and well as it is possible to ride to hounds, with the fearful odds of a giant’s stature and sixteen stone, against the ten stone men on their thorough-bred tits. In fact, one act is recorded relating to the younger brother (Henry) that can have, I should imagine, no parallel in the annals of the chase. In one of Lord Lichfield’s famous runs from Debdell Gorse, in the Dunchurch country, he was riding a one-eyed horse, when the other eye—having been previously amiss, and becoming worse from excitement—failed him also, and he could no longer distinguish ditches or grips, though he could jump gates and stiles. The consequence was, his giving his rider *eleven falls* ; notwithstanding which he saw the finish of the finest run of the year, and one which Lord Lichfield told me he could not have believed any one horse could have carried any man, much less such a weight as Mr. Kingscote’s, to the end of. I am sorry to say the elder brother relinquished the field some years back, but Mr. Henry Kingscote is still going with the Surrey Union, and, no doubt, in his old form.

Lord Kinnaird and Sir John Kaye are first-flight men in Leicestershire. I have already noticed the performance of the latter when leading the field in a quick thing, on his grey stallion. I shall finish the K’s then with the mention of Captain Kennedy (brother to Lord K.), whose riding pleased me much in Yorkshire ; Mr. Knight, of Chawton-park, Hampshire, whom, I ventured to say, I thought would go well any where ; and Mr. Kimmer, a Duke of Beaufort’s, and Lord Segrave’s man, and a capital in a wall country.

We will begin a *laudamus* of the L’s with some of the old ones, and it happens there are several good ones in this list. For example—how I should like to see John Lockley put on mortality again, and come amongst us in the full force of manhood ! He has no business to be in a grave, nor would he have been there now, despite of his heavy fall and his fourscore years, had it not been for that obstinacy—I can find no milder word—for which he was so renowned. Had his horse shown the symptoms which his rider did after an unlucky accident, he would pretty soon have had the phlegm into his neck, and abstracted a gallon of

blood ; and had he permitted the nearest surgeon he could have found to have stuck himself, he would have been amongst us now. But, to be serious. Lockley was one of the most extraordinary men in a saddle perhaps that England ever knew ; and I here do not merely allude to his performance in it with hounds, but to his predilection for it at all hours of the day, for he spent at least half his life on horseback. Lockley was, however, a pre-eminent horseman in the field and on the road ; and, considering his weight *in his best days, little under fifteen stone*, he could go brilliantly to hounds in all sorts of countries, and, I may almost say, on all sorts of horses. But I hear the reader exclaim—was not Lockley *always* well mounted ? Not he indeed. His object was to buy cheap and sell dear, consequently, good judge as he was, all his nags did not turn up trumps. It must be admitted, however, that he had some very brilliant hunters in his day ; amongst the best of which were Confidence,* Ready, and his fancy bay horse, which he rode for many seasons towards the close of his life. But he sold several hunters in Leicestershire before I knew him—namely, in old Meynell's time,—when his judgment was very much looked up to. He was never seen on a low-bred horse, for which alone his memory should be respected ; nothing being less in character of a modern sportsman than to be seen on such an animal. It was amusing, however, to remark what thorough-bred steeds he would now and then be seen upon on the road, as also astonishing was the distance he would ride them on a cup of green tea. But Lockley was a horseman whom it behoves every man to imitate. His seat was firm, but easy to an enviable degree ; his hand steady, and his temper fine. Having failings himself (as he was wont to observe) he looked them over in his horses, and he never gave them up until he found them quite incorrigible. He had likewise a quick eye to hounds and country ; and, having taken a lesson from the late Lord Forester, he always kept *near the pack* in chase, knowing the evil of having ground to make up. Nevertheless, as a sportsman, I thought little of him. For the sake of enjoying an opinion of his own, rather than coincide with that of others, his judgment led him to false conclusions, and it struck me he knew little of hounds. But this was Mr. Meynell's opinion. "*Riding* was Mr. Lockley's forte," said he, and brilliantly would he ride, especially if he thought any man had an eye to his horse. It must, however, be borne in mind, that although age cannot meet in the lists with activity and youth, nor over a country,

* Confidence was a superb animal as an English hunter, by Weasel, by Herod, dam by Young Eclipse, and of course thorough-bred. Mr. Lockley gave 100 gs. for him at the foot of his dam in York streets, and, after riding him several seasons, sold him to Earl Sefton for 600 gs. On his lordship giving up hunting, Mr. L. took him again, and, after carrying him a capital day in Warwickshire, sold him for 750 gs. to Mr. Best. He was ridden, in all, eighteen seasons.

in a fox-chase, Mr. Lockley kept a good place with hounds long after nine-tenths of mankind are afraid to mount even a pony, and betake themselves to the easy chair. A very few years before his decease he distinguished himself in the *three best* runs of the year, with Sir Bellingham Graham's, Mr. Osbaldeston's, and the Warwickshire hounds !

Now then for a laudamus for the hero of Barrosa, the gallant Lord Lynedoch, whom every body has heard of, and whom Napoleon distinguished as "a daring old man." Lord Lynedoch has been obliged to relinquish the chase the last few seasons, by reason of his eyes failing him, for his bodily powers would have yielded only to death. His lordship had fallen into "the sere and yellow leaf" before I had the honour of his acquaintance, but in Mr. Meynell's time he was a conspicuous man with the Quorn hounds. In fact Lord Lynedoch rode as he fought, with the lion's courage and the hero's zeal, and was allowed to be the hardest rider the world ever saw at his advanced age—nearer eighty than seventy. Perhaps his zeal may be measured by the fact of his having, about the period I allude to, refused eight hundred pounds for one of his eight hunters—and for one, to my eye, the very reverse of what is called an old man's horse, being impetuous at his fences, and, as I thought, *raw*. Here is another sportsman to whom we would if we could give the Promethean touch of youth, but alas, that cannot be done. We must acknowledge our gratitude then to this son of Iapetus, for what he has done—for bringing the noble faculties of man into action, and amongst others his management of the horse.

Every one who has not seen the man—a great loss by the way—has seen the print of Mr. Ralph Lambton, in his proper element—with hounds, and those hounds his own. He is mounted on a favourite horse, called *Undertaker*, by St. George, which he rode many seasons. I have reason to believe that, in Mr. Meynell's days, there were few harder riders in Leicestershire than Mr. Lambton, and no man need ride nearer to hounds in chase than he did when I was hunting with him sixteen years back. Indeed, Nim North speaks thus of him in 1825. "Mr. Ralph Lambton is a capital horseman ; his eye I would give any thing to possess, and his riding is not dashed with that jealousy which is so prevalent among the sportsmen of the present day. On the contrary, if he is riding behind, and sees a hound turn, he will call out 'right hand,' 'left hand,' as the case may be, and seems delighted at the young ones getting forward." The same excellent writer also most feelingly describes one of his bad falls—for he had two within a short time—which he had the misfortune to witness. Its consequence was temporary paralysis, from pitching on his head ; and pitching again on his head, in his second fall, had nearly proved fatal to him. He, however, perfectly recovered, with the

exception of a slight distortion of the neck, and it was subsequently to all this that I saw him going so well in Durham.

The Lawley's all ride—"Sir Lawley," as he was called at Melton, in Meynell's time—then Sir Robert Lawley, at the head of them. But the crack man of the three brothers was Frank Lawley, as he is called, M.P. for Warwickshire. It is a long time since I have seen him with hounds, and I fear he has quitted the field ; but he was a prime hand over a country, and what we call a beautiful horseman. He always struck me as a man who ought to have been at the head of a pack of fox-hounds, and I am sure he would have done the thing well. The third and younger brother, Mr. Beilby Lawley in former days, Mr. Beilby Thompson afterwards, and Lord Wenlock now, was also a pretty performer, but I believe he has long since done with hunting. Doing honour to the name was Sam Lawley, huntsman to the late Lord Vernon, whose riding I very much admired. But he was splendidly mounted, his lordship refusing nine hundred guineas for three of his horses in my time.* By the way, Mr. Levett, better known as The (Theophilus) Levett, a conspicuous character in Lord Vernon's hunt, was the gentleman who made the offer. There were few better riders than Mr. Levett (a welter weight), and his horse, Banker, will, with himself, be long remembered in the Atherstone country. Lambert, one of the king's present whips, late George Wyndham's, also deserves notice among the Castors and Polluxes of day.

The mention of the Atherstone country reminds me of perhaps the best man who ever rode over it, and was connected with it—I mean the Earl of Lichfield, who hunted it several seasons, and in the literal acceptance of the word, for he himself officiated as huntsman. On this subject, perhaps I may be allowed the privilege of quoting myself. "When I first knew Lord Anson in the field," I say in one of my Tours, "I thought with many others that he went a hunting because other people went a-hunting," little suspecting that he would have filled the situation he now does—a master of fox-hounds, hunting them himself. At the time I am speaking of he was a very indifferent horseman, displaying but a small share of nerve ; but we must not always judge from first appearances, and above all we should never judge rashly. Lord Anson was fond of hounds ; his fondness for hounds has made him a sportsman ; his fondness for hounds has made him one of the "*hardest and best riders of the present day*"—and I may now add, of any other day. Indeed, as another writer in the Old Sporting Magazine once said of his lordship, "his riding is beyond praise ;" and I believe I may with

* I honour the memory of Lord Vernon for this sportsmanlike act. Nothing is more unfair towards a huntsman, in a strongly fenced country (or, indeed, in any country) like Lawley's than to take from him his horses, which he has made to his own hand.

truth assert, that in all the severe runs his hounds had during the time he hunted them he was never—any more than Sir Bellingham Graham was—known to be out of his place. In the ever memorable run from Enderby to Ashby-de-la-Zouch—fifteen miles point blank, *best pace all the way*, and rendered memorable by a monument, erected by Mr. Loraine Smith, on the spot whereon the *nonpareil* fox was unkennelled—Lord Lichfield displayed as fine horsemanship as was ever seen in any country, although he had the misfortune to pay the price of a horse for the high honours himself and his pack obtained. I confess I liked to see Lord Lichfield in a run. There was a fine slashing style of riding that evinced a determination to get to hounds, and a sort of indifference as to obstacles, that showed where his heart was, in chase, and where he was determined it should be ; and his style of hunter also was magnificent. You never saw him upon any thing but large, well-bred, and commanding horses, more than equal to his weight, and of course perfect fencers. At all events they would soon become so, after his lordship had the handling of them.*

I have heard Sir Bellingham Graham say, that one of the best men *he ever saw in any country*, he found, perhaps unexpectedly, in Shropshire. I mean Mr. Lycester of Rowton Castle, near Shrewsbury, who was going so well when I was in Shropshire some years back—often leading the field in the quickest runs, on a small but wonderfully clever mare, called *The Doe*, which had formerly carried one of Mr. Mytton's whippers-in ; and I understand he has now got a most superior horse he calls Jupiter, on which he equally distinguishes himself. Mr. Lycester comes under the denomination of an elegant horseman as well as a hard rider, qualifications not often united.

There *was* a long list of Lloyds to bring in here, but three of them have changed their names and two only remain. Mr. Lloyd of Aston, one of the trio who managed the Shropshire hounds, was a hard persevering rider, and would be “ with ’em ” if possible. He was game to the back bone, according to the vulgar phrase. I never saw so near a “ go ” for a broken neck as fell to his lot, almost the last time I saw him with hounds. When I helped to pick him up he was black in the face, and the skin of his neck was very much discoloured. In a day or two afterwards he was at work again, and thought no more of the chance he had given to the coroner. Mr. Griffith Lloyd was also one of the hard ones, and a few years back had a still narrower escape, having been given up as lost by Sir Astley Cooper. The injury was occasioned by his horse falling back upon him, and fracturing a bone of the pelvis—as was the case with Dick Burton—and the agony he suffered

* I think I can take upon myself to say, that nothing but severe attacks of gout would have deprived the sporting world of Lord Lichfield and his fox-hounds.

beggars description. His groans were audible at a great distance, but although lamed for life he was sound enough to ride, and went at it again as though nothing had happened. He was a strong horseman, and generally near enough to hounds to see their hunting, of which he was allowed to be a fair judge. But if "*experientia docet*," he ought to be, for he had been many years with hounds, never missing a fixture, whether good or bad, unless interrupted by illness, of which I have reason to believe he had a very small share.

When I visited Mr. Warde, at the time he had the Craven hounds, there was also, on a visit to him, a very pretty rider from Kent, cognomine Lambert, who, I have been given to understand, has since been at the head of a pack of fox-hounds—a situation, from all I saw of him during the fortnight he was in the field with me, he appeared very well qualified for. But I now speak of him as a horseman, and as such I pronounce him perfect—reminding me very much of Mr. Davey, on whom I have already lavished my praise. I would walk five miles any day to see him ride a chesnut horse he had in Berkshire (or indeed any other horse that could do what he did), over a stile which I had the pleasure of seeing him ride him over. He did it like a workman, and it required a workman, I assure you. In fact, Davey himself could not have done it better.

There are two persons who would have made a figure here, if I had seen enough of them for my purpose, but unfortunately I have not. I mean Mr. Lowth, author of the Billesden Coplow poem, and Mr. Joseph Leeds. The former I never met in the field, though I have seen him ride many a beautiful race. But the sporting world had a still greater loss by Mr. Lowth declining hunting early in life. Had he not been an eye-witness of the celebrated Billesden Coplow run, immortalized by his pen, a very garbled account of it would have gone forth to the world; and how many other *chefs d'œuvres* of hounds and men might not have been recorded by his muse! The other great artist, Mr. Leeds, I saw once or twice with the Oakley, but there was nothing to call forth his talent. It is, however, too well known to need notice by me. Mr. Leeds had the credit of making the renowned Clinker into a hunter, no easy task I presume—from what I saw of him afterwards.

One of our best horsemen, as well as most experienced, and I may add, enlightened, sportsmen, is the Hon. Colonel Lowther, Earl Lonsdale's second son. No man need ride better to hounds than Colonel Lowther does, and no more need be said, unless the fact may be worth mentioning of his having ridden one horse, called Postboy, up to his twenty-fourth year, in which year I saw him, quite fresh on his legs, having had an excellent likeness taken of him by Ferneley of Melton.

The blood chills in the veins when we think of the sad end of that gallant

horseman, Captain Locke,* whom I have seen go so brilliantly in Leicestershire and other places, though I always considered him too severe on his horse. Lord Lisle was a very pretty rider, and I have been told, a hard one ; but I never saw his Lordship any where except in the New Forest, and consequently not opposed by fences. Mr. John Lucy of Warwickshire, made himself signal by being one of *three* that went the tremendous run Lord Middleton had from out of the Warwickshire Vale to Ditchley Park, twelve miles from Oxford—every other man being beaten to a stand still, and the hounds taking up their abode for the night in the Duke of Beaufort's kennel at Heythorpe. Not one of Lord Middleton's men, capably mounted as they were, could get within reach of their hounds. There were also a few crack Meltonians at starting, but all, save one, who will be mentioned in his place, shared the same fate. One of the best of them declined when I cut it, about six miles from the finish. Without detracting from the merits of either Mr. Lucy or his horse, it behoves me to state, that he was the lightest man in the field ; that the country was very deep for the first ten miles, and great part of it on the ascent ; but this proves that weight tells in the "telling pace" with hounds, as well as over the course.

The two Messrs. Legard, whose father once had Sir Tatton Sykes's country, were crack men in Holderness—George being, I believe, a turn the better of the two.

* My readers may remember that he was drowned in the Lake of Como, before the eyes of his wife, and a party of friends, who were, however, wholly unable to render him any assistance.



CHAPTER VIII



XFORDSHIRE, in the upper part, or what is called the Hill Country, has been hunted by the late and present Dukes of Beaufort, for a period of full eighty years in succession. It is, for the most part, a cold cheerless tract, unpleasing to the eye of any one but a sportsman or a farmer, and not altogether composed of that sort of soil considered favourable to scent. The enclosures, however, are large, giving room to horsemen and hounds, and, with the exception of the woodland part of it, the covers are favourably situated for sport. The fences are, for

the most part, stone walls, originally from four to five feet in height ; but what are termed the “ top stones ” of many of them being thrown down, the height is very much diminished. Neither are they considered dangerous fences, as they generally yield to the weight of a horse and his rider, and are very rarely accompanied by ditches. Notwithstanding this, it requires that horses should be accustomed to walls, as in that case they go close to them previously to rising at them, and thereby very much lessen the exertion.

The lower part of the country, under Chipping Norton, bordering on Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, is strong and deep, and the Evenload and the Kingham Brooks are every now and then to be faced. Foxes will also sometimes sink the hill from Walton Heath—one of their outside covers—and enter the Vale of Warwickshire ; and perhaps once or twice in a season, from Sandford Park, face the fine Vale for Wroxton Abbey, near Banbury, when a *splitter*, and too often some dead horses, are the result—the country being very severe.

The Woodlands of Oxfordshire are large, particularly those of Ditchley, Tar Wood, Gawcomb, Bruen Woods, Witchwood Forest, &c., but they are well preserved, and often produce excellent foxes, which after some trouble to hounds to make them break, are very difficult to kill.

The favourite covers of this hunt, in what is called the open country, are Addle-strap, Farmington Grove, Payne's Furze, and Oddington Ashes, near Moreton-in-Marsh, Walton Heath, Sandford Park, and Heythorpe, or Heythrop.

As the late Duke of Beaufort hunted two countries, he had of course, two kennels. One at his well-known seat at Badminton Park, Gloucestershire ; and the other at Heythorpe Hall, near Enstone, Oxfordshire, where he for many years occupied the noble seat of the Earl of Shrewsbury, which he would doubtless have long continued to occupy, had it not been destroyed by fire. His Grace finished that season at Chapel House Inn, eighteen miles from Oxford, but he afterwards took the lodge in Witchford Forest, where he formerly resided, when Marquis of Worcester, in the lifetime of his father.

The Duke of Beaufort's hounds divide the season between the Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire countries, and pretty equally so as to the periods of hunting each. As may be expected, the absence of the hounds for the respective kennels is much regretted by the followers of them ; but circumstances must be submitted to. It is possible the first-mentioned country might support hounds the season throughout, three days a week, but not so the Badminton, of which the following is a sketch :—

There is a great portion of grass land in the Badminton country. Indeed, from some covers, Stanton Park for example, about ten miles from Badminton, and near to Malmsbury, there is as good a country to ride over, and one as advantageous to hounds, as almost any part of England can show. The foxes from that cover are also noted for running stoutly and taking a deal of killing. A gorse cover in Badminton Park is likewise a sure find, and generally shows a run. Some years since a fox was repeatedly found in an old ivy-tree in it, and gave some excellent runs. Mr. Kingscote, who married one of the Duke's daughters, now, unfortunately, no more, made several gorse covers on his property, which are great acquisitions to this hunt. Shipton Wood, close to the town of Tedbury, the property of Mr. Escourt, and Silk Wood, between Tedbury and Kingscote, are likewise favourite covers ;—as also Box Wood, the property of Mr. Huntley, whose son, the captain, was a great supporter of this part of the country. Hawkesbury-Upton, Elm-Ash, and Draycot Park, the seat of the Misses Long, are also excellent fixtures.

There are fine Woodlands in the Badminton country. The lower woods, on the Sodbury side, perhaps stand first. These often send out "a traveller" to Colonel Berkeley's covers, whose pack bring him back at a merry pace—that is, provided he do not give up the ghost on the road, for the country is a choking one. It is the opinion of many good sportsmen, that these and the other Wood-

lands would stand more hunting than the Duke gives them, which is too often the case, according to the present system of fox-hunting.

The Oxfordshire country is a good deal more extensive, embracing a large tract of hill and vale. It joins the Bicester country, the Warwickshire, Colonel Berkeley's, Lord Ducie's, Mr. Horlock's, and Sir John Cope's ; but does not transgress the boundary of the county, though it verges on the borders of several. Indeed, the fourshire stone—a stone standing in four several counties—is near to one of the favourite covers of the Hunt. In better times, the towns of Chipping Norton, and Woodstock, as well as the inn at Chapel House, contained parties of gentlemen in attendance on the Duke's hounds ; but those days are gone by. A few old stagers, however, are still occasionally to be found at the village of Charlbury ; and now and then a visitor or two to the other places.

For the conspicuous riders of this part of Oxfordshire, we must look to some of the old ones, who have done the trick in better countries.

Mr. Evans of Dean, once a Leicestershire man also, and Mr. Webb of Kiddington, Mr. Lewes, and Mr. Thornhill, ranked high ; nor must Mr. Holloway of Charlbury, be passed over. He was a thorough sportsman, and—like his horses in chase—would go till nature cried “ enough.”

All who like to see the manly character displayed, will receive pleasure in recollection of the name of the late Rev. Harry Waller, who was for so many years an everyday attendant on the Duke's hounds. It was justly said of him, that he was “ one of the hardest old men England ever produced.” Neither did she ever produce a more determined rider, nor a better judge of hunting. “ Deaf as a post ”—grown old in years—not the best mounted man in the hunt—yet he would be with the pack, and was scarcely ever found absent at the finish of a good run.

All the Somersets inherited their late noble father's passion for the chase, although the still more honourable occupation of arms has divided the pursuits of some of them. The late Duke himself was never a forward rider, but his brother, the late Lord Charles Somerset, was a good man in his day over Leicestershire, in the time of the justly renowned Mr. Meynell. His lordship was also a fair gentleman-jockey, contending every year at Bibury, against the present Duke of Dorset, Messrs. Germaine, now Lord Sackville, Delmé Radcliff, and others, and he was considered a first-rate judge of race-horses. The present Duke has followed hounds all his life, and trained on in keenness for the noble sport. Lord Granville Somerset, however, is the quickest of his name, and has generally as good a place in a run as any man in the field. In the Badminton country, Mr. Peach of Tockington, Mr. Southcote Austin, Mr. Miles, and Mr. George Anstice, were generally leading men ; the three former, however, spent most part of their winter with the



D. Beaufort

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT. By T. C. WILSON, who helped to illustrate Wildrake's "Cracks of the Day," as in a portrait-sketch of Ostaldeston.

MAP OF THE
MEETS
OF THE
DUKE OF BEAUFORT'S
HOUNDS.

Scale of English Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6



Burton Hunt, in Lincolnshire ; and Lord Ducie, perhaps the best amongst them, also quitted the Duke's hounds, to hunt a pack of his own.

Mr. George Robins of Baverstone Castle, near Tetbury, a wealthy yeoman, with his trepanned skull, occasioned by a fall, should not pass without notice ; nor should Mr. Kymber, an excellent sportsman of the same cast, be left out of the list of the Oxfordshire good ones. The retirement from the field of Thomas Kingscote, Esq., the Duke's son-in-law, was lamented by all good sportsmen, as he was one of the best welter weights England ever saw. That out-and-outer Jack Taylor, now no more, will never be forgotten as a horseman of *the very first class*.

It is useless to say that the private character of the late Duke of Beaufort was an example worthy of imitation by every English nobleman, and every English gentleman, as a husband, a father, a landlord, and a master. An attempt was once made to assail it, but in what did it end ? In the discomfiture of the author of it, and a complete refutation of the calumny on the part of himself and his family. But what was the motive of it ? Ill-will towards his Grace ? No ; the motive was the destruction of every thing that is respectable, and a wish to build up a new-fangled fabric on the ruins. As a master of fox-hounds, the duke also stood pre-eminent—not only as regarded his nobleman-like conduct in the field, but as a scientific sportsman. His kennel stood, perhaps, third from the top of all the kennels in England. His old huntsman, Philip Payne, greatly assisted his Grace in this department of his establishment ;—I mean breeding the hounds. Payne proved himself a man of sense and discernment, greater than is usually met with in persons of his cast in life. With Mr. Warde for his pattern, he did not breed his hounds merely with a view of flying over a country on high scenting mornings, but to stoop to, and hunt their foxes over, perhaps, one of the worst scenting countries in England. Neither was elegance of form lost sight of,—on the contrary, the Duke of Beaufort's hounds are as handsome to the eye as fox-hounds need to be. Indeed they have long shown a decided superiority over most of the neighbouring packs—a superiority so generally acknowledged, that the mention of it cannot be productive of either envy or ill-will.

Each of the Duke of Beaufort's countries is plentifully supplied with foxes. Vulpecides are unknown, and the landowners are well-wishers to the sport. Among the good friends to the hunt, Lord Andover, and Mr. Blaithwaite of Dyrham Park, should not be overlooked. In short, few, if any hunts are better conducted throughout ; and all good sportsmen should put up a prayer for its continuance, since there is but too much reason to apprehend that fox-hunting is on the wane.

Heading the list of servant riders stood Will. Long, formerly whipper-in and afterwards huntsman to the late Duke of Beaufort. He was very well described,

I remember, in one of Peter Pry's letters in the *Old Sporting*. "Will. Long," says he, "as a huntsman, is as near perfection as may be. . . . To gain his objects, horsemanship is important, and in this he is unrivalled. I invite all lovers of a chase to see him ride one ; the finest seat, with such hands as are rarely in use ; he rides without jealousy, and takes the country as it comes. If I could take portraits, I would have Long putting his horse at a stone wall, with the hound Pillager at his side—perfect specimens." Mr. Lewes, who long hunted with the Duke, and was, I believe, a member of his hunt (colour not blue, but black), was a beautiful rider to hounds, and would go in any country that is hunted.

Reserving him for a *bonne bouche*, I now bring forward Mr. Lindow, and I must pay a warm tribute to his talents ; since there are many, many, crack men—Meltonians too—of the past, and indeed of later days, who have never set eyes on this "Goliath of degrees ;" although they have seen him going a slapping pace on a snuff-box, and certainly nothing could more closely resemble the man. Indeed, I remember that, some years ago, in a letter from Paris to the *Old Magazine*, from a very crack man, under the signature of "An Old Un"—well-known at Melton—the writer said, that "having seen Musters with hounds compensated him for never having seen Meynell, and Thomas Assheton Smith for never having seen Lindow."

I believe I have already stated, that I was in the same form or class, at Rugby, with Abraham Rawlinson and Lindow Rawlinson, "twin brothers of the same womb," as Shakespeare has it, and all I knew of them in the throng was,—first, that they were so like to each other that it was very difficult to distinguish them (indeed, like the tennis player, who was fraudulently exchanged for his twin brother in the middle of the game, either one of these brothers could have represented the other, and we only knew them apart by a difference of dress) ; secondly, that I was always very civil to them, for they were devils to fight, and you might as well have struck a deal board as either of their mugs ; thirdly, they were as ready with their lessons as with their fists ;* and lastly, they were called "devilish conceited fellows" behind their backs, though few dared tell them so to their faces ; in short, evidently showing that some day or other, and in some way or another, they would prove to the world they were not sent into it, as Horace says, "merely to assist in consuming its fruits," but to become candidates for a lasting fame. Like Juno's swans also, they "went coupled and inseparable."

The first time I met Mr. Lindow as a sportsman—having dropped the name of Rawlinson, in compliance with the will of an uncle who left him a good fortune—was in 1803, at Melton, where he was a member of the Old Club, in the height of

* I shall never forget the hiding that Lindow (without a scratched face) gave a lad by the name of Halsted, a stone heavier than himself. His face the next day resembled a plum pudding.

his riding fame, and in the possession of the celebrated Clipper, having the character of "THE BEST HUNTER IN ENGLAND!" On their first starting in life it was a toss up which might make the most brilliant horseman of these twin brothers, but Lindow had advantages which rather gave him the lead. In the first place he took to the racing saddle, and had a good share of practice at Bibury, when Bibury was in all its glory, and afterwards at Kingscote, which of course strengthened his seat and improved his hand. His three or four winters' residence at Melton afterwards made him a master of the art, and becoming possessed of "the best hunter in England" for Leicestershire, for the weight he could carry,—which was just his own, say a little more than twelve stone with his saddle—placed him on the pinnacle of fame. He had of course several other brilliant horses which I very well remember, but I will only dwell upon the Clipper. He was a spiry chesnut gelding, showing a great deal of blood—thorough-bred, no doubt—with the devil's own bad temper and "shocking bad" fore legs. All those who remember him will remember the following circumstance, and those who do not will not require to be told *why* he was named The Clipper. Towards the end of a capital run with the Quorn hounds, over the severest part of Leicestershire, Assheton Smith on Garry Owen, and Lindow on this horse, found themselves *alone* with the pack—no other horseman being in sight, and the fox sinking before them. Both horses at length stopped, but Lindow's went the longest. But why called the Clipper? The word in common use denotes the reverse of speed (metaphorically a stopper), but the word-book of the Falconer gives the licence; and beautifully hath Dryden applied it:

"Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and *clips it down the wind*."

As regards myself, I always particularly admired Lindow's style of riding. Independently of his quickness and *nerve equal to any thing*, he was an excellent judge of pace, very strong in his saddle, and rarely over-matched his horse. As to his seat, it was perfect; but, as I have before said, it is known to almost every one, having been in almost every snuff-box or print-shop window in Europe, and the representation extremely correct. When "going a slapping pace" he generally stood up in his stirrups, having his horse fast by the head; and although some persons vote this slow, and always sit down on their saddles, no one can dispute the advantage of shifting the position of the weight, and thereby relieving the muscles. The proof of the pudding lies in the eating. No man went better than Lindow went, *in very fast times*, and it is to be regretted that he gave up Leicestershire in the prime of life, with ample means for the enjoyment of it, for he was a

great ornament to the field. The reason assigned was said to be, that he found the young ones pressed too closely upon him in a run, and that he could not *always* have the best of it. I am inclined to believe this ; but that "*aut Cæsar, aut nullus*," is the devil, and drives many a good man into the shade, from fear that his laurels may fade.

The letter M produces an awful list, but with the grammarians it is "never mute." With whom then shall I commence—with the pride of ould Ireland, Valentine Maher ? To be sure I shall, as his countrymen say ; but if your readers could hear him, with his own sweet voice, describe the accidental meeting between himself and a tenant from the county of God knows what, all I have to tell of him would read mighty flat indeed. Charles Mathews himself could alone equal it, and I much regret his having never heard it. Now what shall I say of him as a horseman ! Why only what I have already said, that no daughter of Eve need ever produce a better. Indeed I may perhaps, without fear of contradiction, assert that, for power over his horse in proportion to his weight in the scales, Mr. Maher has only been exceeded by *one*, and to him all must bow. For eye to hounds, he was perfect ; for knowledge of the countries he hunted in, unrivalled : for pace, equal to any one ; and when he liked it few men could head him, nor could hounds, on the best scenting days, beat him. But there is generally a "but." Of later years, Mr. Maher was not an every-day man. If the field got a start of him the "*aut Cæsar*" came across him, and he would not persevere to get a place. In one description of horsemanship Leicestershire never saw his equal—I mean his riding what is called "a lark," or the devil take the hindmost, a frolic he often indulged in, and in which his topographical knowledge gave him advantages.* To sum up all, his name will be remembered at Melton for another generation to come, and his place will not readily be supplied. He saw upwards of twenty-three seasons in Leicestershire, having gone there in 1811. He "did the thing" like a sportsman—his stud consisting of from a dozen to fifteen hunters : and he was a constant attendant upon hounds.

The next on my list is Mr. Maxse, (if not the best,) one of the *very* best men that Leicestershire ever saw, or perhaps will ever see again. Where was the man to be found much better mounted than Mr. Maxse ? but his weight, and his style of riding, compelled him not to look to appearances, but to points and *features indicative of power and speed*, even if they should be combined with large heads, and

* On this occasion the signal is—"Who is for Melton ?" and, with a few hundred yards' start, it must have been a good man on a good horse that could have caught Valentine Maher. This is all very well with your Meltonians, with a dozen or sixteen horses in their stables, but it will not do in the provincials.

raw-boned hind quarters—the line of beauty being violated. What did he, Mr. Maxse, say to me when I asked him whether he should keep the King of the Valley for his own riding, raw and awkward as he was? “My good fellow,” replied he, “we heavy weights must not be nice about mouths and tempers; we must be content with *being carried to hounds in the best manner we can.*” As for their tails, I can only say, they generally showed them to three parts of the field in quick things, and being often only visible at a distance, it was better perhaps they should not be too small. On the fashion of the switch tail I have already given my opinion, nor is it worth repeating here.

But, putting out of the question the “*iali auxilio*,” let me speak of Mr. Maxse as a horseman—as a sportsman, it is not my object, he being universally allowed to be a good one. I conclude I have a right to quote myself, and in one of my tours I thus speak of this justly celebrated performer:—“Among the high weights in Leicestershire Mr. Maxse is quite a front-rank man, remarkably well mounted for that country, his horses having a great deal of power upon short legs, with a good allowance of blood. Strange to say, he has one horse, called Cognac, which has carried him nine seasons, and is still fresh and well. His weight is sixteen stone, but his seat on his saddle is much in his favour. He sits well down on his fork, close behind his horse’s shoulders—the point of union between the rider and his horse—and has a fine bridle hand. As a proof of this, he went through one whole season, and up to Christmas in the next, without having a fall. He was also well carried two seasons by a horse that had been nerved—a very rare occurrence.” On a horse called The Baron, purchased of Sir Bellingham Graham, Mr. Maxse often distinguished himself,—but most particularly so in a burst with the “Squire’s” bitch pack, from the Coplow, of *forty-eight minutes without a check*—one short cast only having been made, *in a trot*. Out of a large field only seven were present at the death, Mr. Maxse, on the Baron, being one. On another occasion he made himself signal; for, by a lucky arrangement of his horses, he saw the two best runs of the year, in Leicestershire, *on the same day*, and with two packs of hounds. First, a brilliant forty-five minutes with Lord Lonsdale, from Woodwellhead to Goadby, in which he was capitally carried. He then rode to Waltham pastures, whither he had sent a horse, with the hope of falling in with the Duke of Rutland’s hounds, which he did just as they had found a fox that afforded a brilliant run. These facts may be relied upon, as they were stated on the authority of a letter from Melton to myself, detailing a week’s sport; but I have not been explicit enough as to the merits of the second act performed this day by Mr. Maxse. Such was the severity of the Duke’s run, that Goosey and his whips had been beaten an hour before the finish—the only man then with them

being Lord Wilton, on a borrowed horse, having tired his own ; but *the last man who declined was Mr. Maxse !* Two years after this, in a run with Osbaldeston—eighteen miles an end, the finish being seen but by twelve out of a hundred and fifty who started, *Maxse being one of the twelve.* So much for the coach horses !

Sir James Musgrave was well known in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, and Berkshire, as a first-rate horseman, previously to his appearing in Leicestershire, where he acquired a high reputation, as well as a horseman as a sportsman, and has been for some years a member of the Melton Old Club. It is quite unnecessary that any man should go nearer to hounds, to enjoy the pleasure of hunting, than Sir James went, and he rode the best of cattle. He also rode like a sportsman, never pressing upon hounds. His stud generally consisted of from ten to a dozen hunters, and the condition of them was all one could wish.

The mention of Sir James leads me to that of Mr. Moore, also of the Melton Old Club, a sportsman of long standing, and an excellent friend to fox-hunting. There might be faster riders than Mr. Moore, but no man could give a better account of a run, nor did any man enjoy one more. His stud generally consisted of ten strong well-bred horses.

Going back in the world, I must bring into notice the late Lord Maynard, who, with his friend and brother sportsman, Mr. Childe, was the first to introduce the really hard-riding system into Leicestershire, in the time of the famous Meynell. Indeed, his Lordship may be called one of the school-masters of those ever-to-be-envied days. Then he was not only a dashing rider and a good sportsman, but one of the pleasantest men in the field I ever came across. He was also an excellent judge of a horse, and he one day made a remark in my presence which I have often thought of since. Some gentlemen in his rear were discussing the merits of a hunter which was for sale, whilst the hounds were drawing a gorse cover ; and one of them observed, that he was a likely horse to carry a woman. “ Whose horse is that ? ” said his Lordship, turning himself round quickly in his saddle ; “ I’ll give two hundred guineas for him to-morrow ; for if he will carry a woman *well*, he will carry me *better*.” His Lordship was the delight of the society in which he moved—whether in the field or elsewhere, and was much looked up to as a sportsman. In a run over Leicestershire he got an awful fall at a brook, which distorted the vision of his left eye, but in other respects he was none the worse for it. His famous horse, Holyhock, on which he so often distinguished himself, was the sire of many good hunters, and, amongst others, of Mr. Loraine Smith’s famous hunter of that name, for which Lord Sefton offered him eight hundred guineas, when he, Lord S., hunted Leicestershire.

Quitting Leicestershire for the present, Mr. Musters next presents himself ; and where can I find a better specimen of the British horseman ? It is a great treat to see him ride over a country. He does the thing so neatly, so quietly, and yet in so workmanlike a manner, that it does one's heart good to behold him. Then see him get a fall ! By heavens, he even does that with a grace. He rises from the ground with all the *sang froid* imaginable ; first looks at his horse, then at the (I wish I could still say *his*) hounds, and then away with him again. But looking at Mr. Musters now, who could fancy his riding races at Bibury, and being described in the Coplow poem as " Musters the slim " ?

" After him plung'd Joe Miller, with Musters so slim,
Who twice sank and nearly paid dear for his whim."

All that we can say on this subject is, that he has thickened wonderfully since that period ; but his weight has not stopped his getting to hounds, for I believe it is acknowledged by all the sporting world, that during the many years in which he hunted them, he was seldom absent when his assistance was wanted. His gentlemanly mirth, his merry heart, his cheering holloa—in short, faculties which can be found in very few in the same perfection, fitted him for his task, and told in the balance against the general curse of gentlemen huntsmen.

Mr. Musters is now a master of more than thirty-four years' standing, and was last season, as I can speak from experience, as keen as ever in every department of his office.* It must not be forgotten that he was a pupil of Mr. Meynell, as well as of his own father, who kept fox-hounds before him, and was a sportsman of a high estate. And what a compliment did Mr. Meynell pay to his pupil in one of the last acts of his sporting career, by making him a present of ten couples of his best old hounds, with which he found good materials for his kennel ! The preceptor must have perceived the seeds of excellence in his pupil, and it is to be lamented that he did not live long enough to see the perfection in the fruit.

Speaking of Mr. Musters as an individual, no man was ever better qualified by nature for all the duties of a master of hounds. His personal appearance, and elegant manners, could not fail in procuring him respect from all who attended his hounds in the field, and sportsmen could not but be delighted with the practical science he displayed. No man ever yet born has been so universally allowed to attach hounds to himself, and obtain command over them in a short time, as the gentleman in question has been able to do ; and the well-known story of his pack breaking away at the sight of him, as he was crossing the country on his road to a dinner party, is a striking instance of this extraordinary faculty on his part.

* Jack Musters died in 1839.

I did not know Mr. Musters as a master of hounds, until I saw him in Northamptonshire, where he was very badly supported by the squires of the country, in spite of which he showed the best of sport. Then he was used still worse in his own country, where his hounds were poisoned by some dastardly scoundrels, which imposed upon him the necessity of having the survivors muzzled on their road to cover !—a sight that I should not have believed, twenty years back, would ever have been presented to English eyes.

As a master, there are many of past and present days, who have done the whole thing, as the term is, in better style than he has done it, but none more effectually in a real sportsman's eyes. He was, as I have already said, cradled in a kennel, having actually performed the part of amateur whipper-in to his father, who hunted parts of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire for at least fifteen years ; and when he sold his pack to the late Sir Harry Harpur, the celebrated Shaw, who hunted them, was heard to say, that Mr. Musters—or rather Mr. John Musters as he was then called—was often of more use to him when a difficulty occurred, than both his whippers-in. In fact, he was as regularly educated for hunting hounds, as a churchman is for the church, and has given the lie to the generally correct assertion that no gentleman ever can make a truly good huntsman, which may be accounted for by the following reasons. First, because, having other pursuits and avocations, they are precluded from giving their time and attention to acquire a thorough knowledge of the system, which the servant, who has no other calls on his time and attention, is enabled to do ; and, secondly, that their over anxiety to excel, and to stand high in the estimation of their field, creates a degree of excitement not experienced by the servant, but generally fatal to the gentleman who undertakes to hunt hounds.

Combining the character of a sportsman with that of social man, it would be difficult to find a fellow to Mr. Musters, or one better qualified for the station he so long filled, of master of a pack of fox-hounds. Of his ability as a huntsman, not a word more need be said, and I shall conclude my notice of him, with my best wishes for a long and happy life to himself, and all like him, at the same time summing it up, as the lawyers say, in the following words, applied to him by myself, on a former occasion. “ There was a time when he could have leaped, hopped, ridden, fought, danced, played cricket, fished, swam, shot, played tennis, and skated with any man in Europe.”

His countryman, the late Lord Middleton, next occurs to me. I did not know him till the prime of his days was past, therefore, as far as my knowledge of him extends, I cannot place him among the hard riders, but I call him a very fine horseman. He was, however, very uncertain, some days going well and others not at



LORD MIDDLETON AND HIS CLUMBER SPANIELS.
*From a mezzotint proof after C. HANCOCK, belonging to Messrs. Forté.
See Nimrod's account of this old sportsman, pp. 130, 140, 172, 173, 174.*

all. He was splendidly horsed, and it was not to be wondered at that he should now and then do something that was splendid ; and I remember his once going on the morrow, with " plummet and line," to take the dimensions of a brook he had ridden over the day before. However, all things must have an end, and I saw the finish of his lordship's prowess. His favourite horse, Billy Button, gave him a fall and rolled on him, but it appeared to me to be much cry and little wool. However, we must give credit to the noble lord for making a fresh start with hounds, despite all his infirmities.

Lord Middleton had one of the principal essentials to hunting a country. He had an inexhaustible purse, and was by no means shy of dipping into it.

In his conduct towards Mr. Corbet, in the purchase of his hounds, the liberal spirit of the British nobleman was manifest. The price was, I think, fifteen hundred pounds, for which sum he sent his cheque, saying that he considered the hounds to be a gift.

I never could satisfy myself as to whether Lord Middleton had acquired that knowledge of hounds and hunting which his experience, both as a master and amateur, ought to have enabled him to attain. I think he was a fine judge of the animal dog generally, and of the spaniel especially ; for I have never seen such as he bred and possessed ; I also think he had an eye to most of the essential points in hounds, but it was too much attracted to legs and feet, to the disregard of other points. That elegance of neck and shoulder, that strength of thigh, that protuberant bodily muscle, which some of the modern packs that I could name exhibit, were far from prevailing features in his pack : and, but for their splendid condition,—and such I admit was apparent to a great degree, particularly in Harry Jackson's time,—the want of them would have been more conspicuous than it was. And one proof of this condition, is in a run they had in the year 1825, the greater part of which I witnessed, when they fairly ran away from a well-mounted field of one hundred and fifty horsemen—three only excepted—running their fox to ground at Ditchley in Oxfordshire, at the end of seventeen miles, as the crow would fly, and over dreadfully severe ground both for horses and hounds. Strange to say, neither huntsmen nor whips could get near the pack towards last, and they were taken to the Duke of Beaufort's kennel, at Heythrop, for the night.*

* As my old and esteemed friend, the late Mr. West of Alscot Park, of no small racing celebrity, is now in his grave, I may mention a little incident connected with this run. It was known that a few Melton men would be out, and as I was dining at Alscot the preceding evening, I was thus addressed by Mr. West—"My old friend Musgrave (Sir James, one of the oldest of the Meltonians) holds Warwickshire cheap. Now you shall ride Opodeldoc (formerly one of his race horses, and made into a capital hunter by his whipper-in to his harriers) on condition that *you try to beat Musgrave*." Glad to save my own stable, and pleased to have such a mount, I at once promised to do what I knew I could

One of the most unfortunate acts committed by Lord Middleton was giving up that fine woodland country, the Meriden, in which we saw such capital sport in Mr. Corbet's time, in the spring. I have yet to see better foxes than these woodlands produced, or better runs at that season of the year. It has since been attempted to make a country of these woodlands, together with a part of what is called the Stratford country ; but a man must be an enthusiast in fox-hunting to hunt rough woodlands all the year round. His Lordship also gave up some fine country on the Combe (Lord Craven's) and Dunchurch side which Mr. Corbet thought much of in the spring, and where he occasionally had the pleasure to see some members of all the neighbouring hunts, including those of the Quorn, Belvoir, &c.

Harry Jackson, whom I previously knew, when first whip to Sam. Lawley, with Lord Vernon's hounds, hunted Lord Middleton's pack for several seasons, on his Lordship succeeding Mr. Corbet in Warwickshire. I considered him an excellent kennel-huntsman, but slow and slack in the field,—so much so, that I have more than once heard Lord Middleton tell him, " he was thinking more of his dinner than finding his second fox." He was latterly supplanted by Tom Smith, his Lordship's first whip, who was a favourite servant of his noble master, and, by a curious coincidence, was at that period the third " Tom Smith " hunting hounds—the two others being the " renowned Tom " of Quorn celebrity, and Mr. Smith, late of the Craven, and since of the Pytchley.

But Lord Middleton's favouritism in the field and the kennel did not confine itself to Tom. Smith. He had a favourite hound called Vanguard—and a fine animal he was—that absolutely had the *entrée* of his dinner-room, and by such and other indulgences—giving him bread, for example, in the field—he well nigh destroyed his propensity to find a fox. At all events, he made him one of the slackest hounds in his pack.

Lord Middleton was naturally a very fine horseman, being strong in his seat, and with a very good hand ; and he would occasionally ride well up to his hounds ; but no doubt his best days in that respect were past before I knew him : and I saw the finish of him as a horseman. I saw him get a fall, from the effects of which he never sufficiently recovered so as to be " himself again : " and a most extraordinary fall it was, and from one of his favourite horses. He merely put him

not do—namely, to beat one of the best men of his day over a country. Strange, however, to say, Sir James and myself both pulled up in the same large field, he having the lead at the time, and we rode to Stratford together, Opodeldoc being unable to rise at a low sheep hurdle ; and Sir James's horse not a whit better. I told the baronet of this at Melton, and it caused him to smile at the jealousy and *amour propre* of his old Warwickshire friend.

into a trot on some smooth green-sward, when he crossed his legs, fell, and rolled over his rider.

No man rode better cattle than Lord Middleton did, and, as I have already stated, his men were splendidly mounted in the field. His grey horse, Smoker, was one of the cleverest animals that ever met my eye ; and when his noble owner was on his back, he looked both the nobleman and the sportsman. And I shall now dismiss his Lordship as a master of hounds with this short remark :—he possessed many of the qualities which masters of hounds should possess, and some of them to a great extent. He was regardless of all necessary expense in his establishment—doing all he was required to do towards the country he hunted, with a liberal hand. His turn-out at the cover side was first-rate, and what more could have been desired ?

Lord Charles Manners was among the trumps, and an honour too, for no man stood higher in the sporting world. As a horseman he is pre-eminent. There was one circumstance connected with Lord Charles Manners' character as a rider to hounds, which ought not to escape comment. He was the first to banish the half-bred horse from his stud, never riding any thing in the field but pure blood. Do not, however, imagine I am going to belie my experience by asserting, that nothing but thorough-bred horses can live over Leicestershire, or other grass countries—on high scenting days—with hounds ; but the better they are bred, no doubt the more likely they are to do so. But it was at one time not only asserted but believed, that, speaking generally, the thorough-bred horse would not face the rough fences of the grass countries. Praise then is due to the man who removed this prejudice against them, at one time so strong ; although amusing stories are on record of the difficulty attending the education of some of this nobleman's young ones, who were unwilling to learn their trade. Of this fact, however, we may assure ourselves—namely, that for many successive years, no man in Leicestershire had such a stud as Lord Charles Manners had ; and report goes so far as to pronounce the average value of them, during two or three seasons, when hunters were selling higher than they now do, to have been five hundred guineas per horse. It was indeed a great treat to all admirers of horse-flesh to see them at the cover side, but still greater to witness the gallant manner in which their rider put them along. Lord Robert Manners also rode well to hounds.

I can only call to my recollection having seen the present Lord Fitzwilliam with hounds twice, consequently cannot speak as to his general performance. A few years back he greatly distinguished himself in a desperate run with the late Earl's hounds, over the severest part of his severe country. The fox ran through fourteen lordships, and only about eight of a large field were up at the death, Lord

Milton one of them. I dare say many of your readers will recollect the day, from the circumstance of his lordship having nearly lost his life on his return home, by falling into a flooded brook, in the dark.

It was not my good fortune very often to meet the renowned Colonel Mellish in the field. But he that did every thing well, was sure to distinguish himself in a favourite pursuit, and I have reason to believe no man could ride harder. The song says—

“ Behold Harry Mellish, as wild as the wind,
On Lancaster mounted, leaving numbers behind ; ”

and thus gives some idea of the man, with hounds. That he was a fine horseman all the world knows ; and as the lines alluding to him were written in his noviciate, we may safely conclude that, when he had the benefit of experience, and entered into the pleasures of the chase, he regulated his pace to that of the hounds he was following ; and he was too good a judge not to live and learn. It is, however, no bad sign in a young one to be a turn too fast.

Lord Mostyn, late Sir Edward Lloyd—one of those members of the old Parliament who, Sir Charles Wetherall said, were “ *pitchforked* into the Lords ”—was for many years a very good man across Oxfordshire, and, for aught I know to the contrary, may be a good man still. However, jesting apart, Lord Mostyn was a fine horseman and very good at water. His eldest son, now the Hon. Edward Lloyd Mostyn, but formerly Mostyn Lloyd, was also one of the best of the Oxfordshire riders ; and I have reason to believe his brother to be as good. He was very promising when at Christchurch, Oxford, and I have heard flattering accounts of his later performances. His elder brother was a sportsman. Sir Edward Mostyn, no relation of the former, but a catholic baronet of old date, would have equalled any of them had not his health been interrupted by violent attacks of asthma. Few men have been better mounted than Sir Edward—from four to six hundred guineas being the price given for several of his hunters. Among these were, 600 gs. for a white-legged horse called the *Clipper* (not Lindow’s), 400 gs. for the *Infant* ;—and I remember his offering Lord Lynedoch the same sum for his *White Stockings*. The history of the *Infant* is somewhat singular. He was thus named—*lucus a non lucendo*—from his being *seventeen hands high*. But the extraordinary part of his history, is the well-known fact of his carrying Dick Foster, when he whipped-in to Lord Foley, in Worcestershire, throughout as tremendous a day as ever hounds had, and in that deep country, when *only four years old*. At Lord Foley’s sale of hounds and horses, John Lockley bought him at 200 gs., and sold him, at a premium of cent per cent, to Sir Edward Mostyn. He was a noble animal, with the temper of a dove. I conclude with saying, that

I have seen Sir Edward Mostyn charge some as savage places—particularly timber—as I ever saw attempted by any one, and I have reason to believe that, had his wind been equal to that of his horses, few men could have beaten him in an half hour's burst.

Let him get well away, and it has always taken a good man to beat Mr. Meyrick, of Bush ; well-known in Northamptonshire, and indeed most other countries. He always rode a good sort of horse bred in his own county, Pembrokeshire, where they were first ridden and *made handy for every thing* by the various descriptions of fence that all rural and picturesque countries afford. His bay horse, Old Jack, which he rode so many seasons, I considered a pattern card for a twelve-stone man. Something having gone wrong one day in Leicestershire with Mr. Meyrick, he took a small sum from a friend to return £100 if he ever met hounds in "that there shire" again, as Tom Wingfield says. I need scarcely say, he paid the £100. Some few years ago, I met a very neat and good rider in Warwickshire, in the person of Major Moray. He was thought much of in Warwickshire, and showed them what he could do over the very strongest part of that country, when Mr. Hay hunted it, in a tip-top fifty-five minutes from Oakley Wood. By the way, I should like to know what is become of a Mr. Murray, from the same side of the Tweed, who was at Melton in 1803. He was a good rider, and had a large stud ; nevertheless, I remember his giving me a long price for a great black Sultan horse I then had, *although it was the last day of the season*. But I mention this for another reason—to show the difference between selling a horse in Leicestershire, and selling him—generally a good week's work—in the provincials. After he agreed to purchase Saladin, I said, "I forgot to tell you, Mr. Murray, that my horse has a broken knee." "It does not interfere with his action," said he : "it's of no consequence." But I have not done with him yet. "I am going to dine with Lord Saltoun to-day," continued he : "but if you'll call on me to-morrow at twelve, I'll give you the money for the horse." Now in those days there was no bank at Melton, and his valet was dispatched to Leicester, to obtain cash for a cheque. As we awaited his return, I amused myself with looking at his supporters on his seal. "The devil take the supporters," said the Scotchman,—*"see what they entail upon me"*—(I conclude as the head of his clan). "I am obliged to build this church,"—pulling out a drawer, and showing me a beautiful plan of the intended edifice. "But," added he, "the whole parish is my own, and it is forty-three miles in length." "Indeed," said I, "had I known that, you should have given me another hundred for Saladin."

There is no man better entitled to a place amongst hard, *aye desperate* riders to hounds than Mr. Mytton was, and a welter weight too. But how is it that he

can come under the latter denomination, who, ten or twelve years back, was riding amongst the gentlemen jockies *under twelve stone*? The question is best answered by the fact of his having become, by the aid of good living, upwards of fifteen stone, with his saddle, for some years past; and I think Sir Bellingham Graham will confirm the truth of my assertion, that he was nothing short of that weight, on his capital Hit or Miss mare, when he so distinguished himself in that famous run with his, Sir B.'s, hounds, of an hour and forty minutes, from Babins Wood, in Shropshire. But it has not been in this run, nor in that run, in one country, nor in another country, that Mytton made himself signal; and yet I might hazard an imputation on my veracity were I to recount *all* the extraordinary deeds of this most extraordinary man, in various situations with hounds. Indeed, adding the hazards for his neck that he has encountered in the field to those to which he has subjected himself elsewhere, the most extraordinary thing after all is, that he was so long in existence. However, confining my remarks to his riding, I am bound to pronounce him one of the most *daring* horsemen that ever came under my eye: and I must likewise add, that, all things considered, he had fewer falls, and tired fewer horses in chase, than his larking and desperate system of crossing countries would warrant the expectation of. But this has been attributable to the immense muscular powers of the man; to a sort of iron grasp by which he held his horses in his hand at all times and upon all occasions, which, let your slack-rein gentlemen say what they may, is no small support to a horse going *his* (Mytton's) pace over a country, and particularly over the uneven surface, the deep ditches, and blind grips of his own country, Shropshire. Indeed, when I last met him, I asked him whether it had ever been his fate so to tire a hunter as not to be able to ride him home, when he declared he never recollected having done so. As to the height and width of fences which have been ridden over by him, I repeat I am afraid to recapitulate them; but I have very respectable attestation to my having once measured a brook that he rode his famous one-eyed horse, *Baronet*, over, in cold blood, in my presence, and found it to exceed, by some inches, nine yards from hind-foot to hind-foot! But far from pleasing reflections are the result of looking back upon these brilliant feats of horsemanship, rarely excelled by any one. On the contrary, one cannot help lamenting that a person so gifted to shine in the field, as Mr. Mytton proved himself to be, should not have taken more care to preserve, unimpaired, the almost unequalled natural powers which he possessed,—so essential to the figure he made.

Mr. Molony, of racing riding celebrity, went very well for some years in Oxfordshire, no man, I believe, better. He was a singularly strong man on a horse for his size and weight, which were among the smallest and lightest. There



JACK MYTTON: "Now for the Honour of Shropshire."
THE SHAVINGTON DAY. A Trial of Rival Horsemen
and of Rival Packs. *Drawn and etched by HENRY ALKEN,*
1837; *aquatinted by E. DUNCAN. The print lent by Messrs. Fores.*

were two brothers of the name of Moody, residing at Southampton, very good men over a rough country. In Sir John Cope's country Mr. Montague was quite the best man save one. From what I have seen of him, he would be good any where with a good stud. At fences he was a glutton, and, like the Moodys, thought nothing of two or three capsize in one day. His name-sake, Captain Montague, of the Guards, was also in high repute—and truly a horseman of the first grade, and I was much pleased with his manner of getting across Shropshire. But he had a high character in better countries than Shropshire. Lord Molyneux was long esteemed one of our boldest, and also one of our best horsemen, and had good experience of the crack countries.

“ Molyneux tries at, what scarce horse will rise at,
 Bold Plymouth bull-finches close at his side :
 Musgrave on Antelope, Baird upon Jemmy Hope,
 Over the grassy slope forward do ride ; ”

says Johnny Campbell of him in his song descriptive of the finish of a fine run with the Quorn, when all the horses were much distressed—his own beaten to a standstill. Lord Molyneux was the man who played the duet with Mr. John Lucy, on the ever-to-be-remembered Ditchley day, before spoken of, on his capital old horse, Oxford, which he rode for so many years, and never had a mane ; and this reminds me of the late Sir Charles Mordaunt, of Walton Hall, Warwickshire, who was third best man in that run, but he did not get to Ditchley. Sir Charles—who could ride like a workman—was this day on a horse he had given a sporting Northamptonshire grazier four hundred and fifty guineas for, a short time before, but I am sorry to say he died the next day. The grazier's name was Manning, famous for a good nag, and for showing him to advantage in the field.

Yorkshire produces several crack riders who come into schedule M. I shall just notice Mr. Milbank, of Thorpe, son-in-law to the late Duke of Cleveland, and once at the head of the Bedale country, formerly hunted by the Duke. Mr. Milbank was the best mounted man, for his weight, in the Raby hunt when I visited it, and therefore, with his use of so good a stud—and few could make better—was always in a good place. He doated upon hounds, and had paid the penalty of his fondness for them in very hard thumps, having been nine times blooded in consequence of severe falls. Mr. John Monson, of Bedale, was also a capital hand, and greatly esteemed as a sportsman by the Duke. In the “ Operations of the Raly pack,” I saw a handsome compliment paid to his riding from the pen of the noble author, on the occasion of his playing a solo with the hounds, on his famous grey mare (those grey mares are always good) at the end of a fine run. I am told that he has been obliged to relinquish the field in consequence of bad health,

but hope I have been misinformed, as he is one of "the right sort" in every sense of the phrase. Mr. Thomas Maude, of Selaby, near Raby, pleased me much with hounds; and I read with pain the account of his two good hunters being destroyed in their stalls by fire. Mr. Alexander Macdonald, son of the late Lord Macdonald, of Thorpe, was a conspicuous character in Yorkshire, and my opinion of him was expressed in a few words. I said he was "as quick as any man in England over a country," and I believe I spoke the truth. His horses were all of full blood, when I was in Holderness, and from his weight and his pace he should ride nothing else.

It is not very often, barring the Leicestershire graziers who are for the most part men of means, that we meet with a very quick one, with hounds, in the shape of a yeoman farmer. But this is easily accounted for. In the first place, their horses are not always in cue; and secondly, they are afraid of bursting them by the pace, lest a tale should be told. I am, however, about to name two exceptions to this rule. One of them, a Mr. Medford, whom I saw in the Holderness country, and I saw him to great advantage. I witnessed his catching hounds, quite after the manner of the Meltonians, over a cruelly deep country, and staying with them afterwards in a very masterly manner—despite of the slice he must have taken out of his weedy grey mare (the grey mare again!) by some very queer places, and one stiff gate out of a deep ploughed field. The other was Mr. Stephen Matthews, of Shropshire, a most respectable yeoman, of whom Sir Bellingham spoke from experience when he said, "nobody could go much better over a country than Stephen Matthews." He was likewise a sportsman, as, indeed, six out of ten Salopian farmers are.

The mention of yeomen reminds me of George Marriott, the celebrated Melton draper, who was a conspicuous man in the Quorn, Belvoir, and Cottesmore hunts, for more than forty years, and has not long retired from the field. I fear from the same cause that myself and many others have retired from it, namely, want of the means to remain in it. Mr. Marriott was a good sportsman, and allowed to have a better knowledge of the country, twenty miles round Melton Mowbray, than any other man. As a horseman, his merit has been universally allowed; for although measuring six feet three inches in height, and stout withal, he maintained a very respectable place with hounds, and consequently sold horses at large sums. But George was also a sportsman; and as such, as well as from his great devotion for hounds, was allowed some latitude in the field. In fact, I have seen him do what I think no other man but himself would have been permitted to do, without "getting goose." But the "ardour of the chase," acted powerfully upon him. I ought to have mentioned, that George sold four horses *of his own breeding*, for 800 guineas, as an encouragement to brother drapers to follow his steps.

The Morants all rode hard, and Mr. E. Morant was one of the best men in the Hambledon country, Hants—by no means one in which a shy rider can acquire a name. He was one of the few that lived to the end of Craven Smith's tremendous day, when he hunted the Hambledon. But, as the song says, "the lad of all lads, was the Warwickshire lad" of that name, who lived so many years at Upton House, on the Edge Hills, a seat of Lord Jersey's. I had a great many years' experience of that gentleman's performance, and I can safely say, he had but one fault as a rider to hounds; and that was, he expected his horses to do impossibilities. To have carried him as he wished to go, they should have had extra legs, extra muscles, extra lungs, extra every thing. In fact, they should have had the wings of the morning, and even then I question their having been swift enough for him. But what followed? why he never had but one horse (by No Pretender) who could carry him through a run of one hour's duration; and, indeed, I have his figure now before me when he made a sad example of himself even upon him. We had had a brilliant hour in Mr. Corbet's time, and Morant went brilliantly up to the last ten minutes, when he and No Pretender were missing. Can I ever forget the state we found them in, after we had killed our fox? No—nor can many of his friends now alive. He was sitting still in his saddle under a blackthorn hedge, a sad example of mis-spent time. He was minus his hat, his face was torn and bloody, and his clothes were rent. No Pretender's tongue hanging out of his mouth, black from pressure on his bit, and very woe-begone did he look. But here was one of the good traits of the man; he had not a spark of jealousy about him, and joined in the laugh his appearance created. "Well," said he to Mr. Robert Canning; "a *very pretty* thing indeed, I am glad you killed him, for the hounds deserved him. *I should have liked to have seen the finish*, but somehow or other the old horse shut up." The fact was, that, not getting a good start, he had put him along at that pace at which no horse could live an hour with hounds. As may be supposed, I witnessed his getting many rough falls, and one which was very near proving fatal, owing to his alighting on a ruck of stones, on his head. And here again comes the man. Apprehending a slight concussion of the brain—appearances evidently denoting it—the doctor had recourse to depletion and other proper precautions, leaving him comfortable for the night, with—"I shall see you again in the morning, sir." The morning came, and the doctor came, but *Morant was gone to the hounds!* Much such another hard one was Mr. Joseph Martin, a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, whom I have before spoken of as purchasing horses no one else would ride. Part of his tackle once breaking, on a run-away brute with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, the following laughable scene occurred. Having no control over the horse, he leaped upon a butcher who

was riding along a road to his market, and both men, with their horses, lay speechless on the ground. The butcher coming first to his senses naturally expressed his astonishment, and in the true language of his calling ; for, looking upon the person of his assailant, as he would upon his fell destroyer, he emphatically exclaimed—"D—n *your* eyes !" I met in Surrey a gentleman by the name of Metcalfe, with whose riding I was much pleased. There was a quickness about him which is the *sine qua non* of modern horsemanship, and I think he would have shone in any country. He was many years a leading man in the Old Berkeley hunt. Mr. Yarnton Mills, of Shellingford, Berks, was well spoken of by Lord Kintore, and distinguished himself in some of his Lordship's best runs over the Vale of White Horse. Indeed, I have seen enough of him myself to pronounce him a good horseman.

The mention of Mr. Mills reminds me of the Hon. Mr. Moreton, now Lord Ducie, in whose country he resided. Mr. Moreton's character in the field is well known, as a first-rate rider to hounds, and equal to any man in nerve. But he rides under the disadvantage of short-sightedness, and yet, though that adds to his merit, it leaves in doubt whether any man in England would be better if such had not been his condition. No one has ridden abler cattle than Lord Ducie. Lord Maryborough's best days were over before I saw his Lordship in the field, but I have seen him ride well to hounds, particularly for his time of life. It is apparent at first view of him in his saddle, that he is a horseman, and as such I wish to record him. From accounts I have read of him in early life, when Mr. Pole, it appears few men rode harder or better. A few years back his Lordship broke his arm, by a fall, in consequence of being ridden against, but was soon at work again.

Some years back I was in the habit of occasionally meeting in the field with one of the best men over a country England ever produced, by the humble title of "Mr. Morgan, hop merchant, of London." On one occasion, and the first, I stumbled upon him in a most extraordinary manner, as the following tale will unfold. It chanced that I was at the turning out of a stag on the Ludlow race course, one fine day in October, in honour of the burgesses' feast. A person appeared in the throng on such a wretchedly bad hack, and of so mean an appearance withal, that the person who collected the half-crowns declined handing him the glove. All that denoted the sportsman was a black velvet hunting cap, his person being enveloped in a thread-bare brown surtout buttoned up to the throat. On the hounds being laid on the scent, however, the scene changed, and much after the fashion of a pantomime. On a signal being given, a countryman rode up to Mr. Morgan with his hunter * ; the threadbare coat was thrown on the ground,

* It appeared afterwards, that, Mr. Morgan was "incog" for a short time in the neighbourhood, and, sportsmanlike, was accompanied by his two favourite hunters, but dispensed with the attendance of his groom.

and the sportsman appeared in the most correct costume of the chase ! But, to be brief. We had a very excellent run, and the riding of Mr. Morgan and the performance of his horse, over a *very difficult* country, were the admiration of the few who could witness them, of which few I had the good luck to make one. But now for another change of the scenes. "Who is this fine rider?" said one. "*Where can he come from?*" said another. "Will he sell his horse?" asked a third. By accident it was ascertained that it was the well-known Mr. Morgan, but he would *not* sell his horse although 200 guineas were offered for him, as he was leading him and another through Ludlow, on the morrow. I should think the world never produced a more perfect hunter ; and, as a proof of his astonishing the natives, the gentleman who offered the 200 guineas for him never before gave half that sum for a horse.

The letter N produces a short list. At the head of it, however, we must place Mr. Neville, of Leicestershire fame, having had a house in the country for some years and a good stud, which he knew how to make use of. I have seen Mr. Napper ride very well to hounds, and he also was known in Leicestershire. By the way, I recollect an anecdote relating to him which may amuse. Some years since I had a good *little* horse called The Adjutant. "You have been offered a good price for your horse," said Mr. Griffith Lloyd to me one day, in Oxfordshire, "*why he is but half a horse.*" 'Twas true he was but a little one by the side of the big brutes he generally rode. But Mr. Napper purchased him, and told me he was never carried so well over Leicestershire as he was twice by The Adjutant. I have never seen Mr. Nicoll in enclosed countries, so can only speak of him as a rider over the New Forest, but horsemanship is much wanted there. It was highly pleasing to me to see this fine sportsman ride to his hounds over that trying country. Looking at his weight, looking at the ground he had to travel over, *and at the pace at which he travelled*, I hesitate not to say, no man could have done it better. His seat was good, and his strength of arm was of use to his horses in assisting them "over the bog and quagmire" of that—to me—infernal country. Of Mr. Field Nicholson I need say but little. His name was up in Lord Yarborough's country before he twice distinguished himself in Leicestershire—first as the rider of Mr. Gilmour's Plunder, and again, on Magic, in the well-known grand steeple-chase which he won. The first attribute of a horseman is courage, next, good hands and seat, and Mr. Field Nicholson possessed them all. He was a very first-rate performer indeed.

There were two good horsemen of the name of Newton—first, Mr. Newton of Pickhill, in Sir Richard Puleston's country, very heavy, but always forward. I remember him in Oxfordshire, where he went well on so-so nags. Secondly,

his namesake in the Bedale country, who was going in the van when I was there, but he told me that would be his last season. He had duties of a graver nature to attend to, and his best horse came up from grass a roarer. Mr. Newnham, who had the Worcestershire hounds, was a capital horseman ; and no man rode harder than he did when I used to meet him, many years back, in Oxfordshire, when he and Sir John Cope joined house-keeping at Bicester. Mr. Nunes, who hunted the Hambledon country, only merits a place here for the good style of hunter you saw him upon, and the excellence of his condition, at a time when that was a rare sight in the provincials. A neighbour of his, Mr. Frederic North—desperately short-sighted—rode as hard as any man I ever saw. “A bountiful eye,” says the proverb, “shall be blessed ;” but a quick sight is every thing with hounds. Mr. Norbury, son-in-law to Sir Richard Puleston, was a very excellent horseman, having the good qualities of hard riders *without their faults*. He was well known in most of the good countries.



CHAPTER IX



FROM O being related to the marvellous, I shall begin the list with the "Hercules of horsemen," as the Quarterly Review calls Squire Osbaldeston. And who, indeed, can dispute his title? Like that son of Jupiter, his whole life appears to have been devoted to searching out and performing the most arduous enterprises; with this difference only, that those of his exemplar were for the good of mankind, those of the Squire to please himself. But, jesting apart, and speaking of Mr. Osbaldeston as a horseman, no one has hitherto equalled the extent of his

labours; and there cannot be a doubt that his name will be remembered for ages to come as one of the most eminent men, in his way, that the world ever gave birth to! Let us then see what he has done. He has hunted hounds, ridden steeple-chases, ridden races, driven trotting matches, all in the same week; and during his occupation of the Quorn country—nine seasons, I believe—he hunted his own hounds six times a week. But what are all these doings, great as they are, to his Newmarket match against time? Absolutely flea-bites. Was ever jockey by profession bold enough to say he would ride fifty, or half fifty, four-mile heats in ten hours? No; but the Squire rode them under nine, and *offered* to ride them in eight! I can scarcely give credit to the fact as I write it. Of what materials is he made? His physical energies must be more than human, or there must be some peculiar formation of body and limbs! Suppose I attempt a description of him, as there may be some to whom his person is not known. But stop. I may save myself the trouble—the pleasure I should have said—of doing this, as it is already done in Nim South's published Tour where he is drawn to the life, and wherein he is humorously depicted as "two single gentlemen rolled into one." He is likewise represented, and truly represented, as about the middle

stature, and such are the men to stand work when put together as tightly as our hero is screwed. Scott says of Scotch James :—

“The monarch’s form was middle size,
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair ;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye
His short curled beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists ;
And oh ! he had that merry glance
That seldom lady’s heart resists.”

But let us look at Mr. Osbaldeston as a rider to hounds. It is my wish to avoid all comparisons with times, places, or men ; and although it is frequently asserted that the Squire has not ridden so hard over a country since, as he did before the severe fall by which his leg was fractured (which it was my fate to witness), it would be a useless attempt to detract from his merits on that score, for experience has proved he has ridden near enough to his hounds to show superexcellent sport as their huntsman. It is true he does not appear comfortable—and who does ?—when some harum-scarum horsemen are close at his heels, when he puts his horse at a fence at which there is a chance of a fall ; but who that saw him upon Clasher against Clinker, ridden by Dick Christian—on Pilot against Polecat—on Grimaldi against Napoleon—a winner on each—will be bold enough to assert that he is not entitled to all his fame ? Of his riding over the race-course I have had but little experience, nor is it within my province to record his doings there ; but speaking of him as a sportsman, I may say of him what Johnson said of a great man in *his* way—that “ what he attempted he performed.”

I have somewhere remarked, that to enable a man to ride straight forward over a country, he *ought* to be as sound and healthy as a prize-fighter when he strips in the ring. Even then how severely does he now and then suffer from the bangs and bruises which befall him ! How many times have I ridden half through a run in agony, from a blow from a gate-post or a tree ; or, what is still more painful, from a stake or grower catching the point of the toe at a fence, and running up the shin to the knee ! Many is the time and oft that, in endeavouring to recover his legs, my horse has struck my head with his own till my eyes struck fire, and my teeth shook in their sockets ! How often have I been rolled over, ridden over, dragged, and trampled upon !* Why, I suppose, about as often as

* I have been three times ridden over—once by Mr. Hawkes, another time by Mr. Edward Tommes, of Southam, when my horse was much hurt ; and, lastly, by a Mr. Willan (not Jack Willan), who leaped upon me on a horse sixteen hands high, and I escaped with a broken spur, torn breeches, and a bruised thigh.



TOM OLDAKER on his Favourite Hunter "Pilot" with the most celebrated Hounds of MR. SEBRIGHT'S Pack, *Painted by R. B. DAVIS, 1835; drawn on stone by J. W. GILES. The print lent by Messrs. Forss.*

most other men who have hunted as much as I have, and who have ridden all sorts of horses—as has been my case. But then, if I had not the “*mens sana*” (which may be doubted) I had the *corpus sanum*—no old sores in aggravation.

What now if I produce perhaps one of the very best men that ever followed hounds, *who followed them with chalk-stoned hands and gout-swollen feet*, and who was obliged to be lifted on to his horse?

“Once Ongley graced the cover’s side,
Its joy, its ornament, its pride;”

and the late Hon. Samuel Ongley is the man I allude to! The last time I saw him with the Oakley pack he was exactly in the state I have represented him, and who rode harder? I answer, no one could ride harder than he did; nor is he the only one that I shall produce who has been lifted on to his horse to enjoy the sport of fox-hunting. But what a compliment to the sport! Was ever another invented by man that could make him rise from the bed of sickness and pain to partake of its exhilarating pleasures? I have never seen the nephews of this gentleman—Lord Ongley and his brother—in the field, but report leads me to believe they wish to follow their uncle’s steps, and remember that they have

“Seen him on some high scenting day,
Shoot like a meteor—to obey
The animating ‘*gone away*.’”*

I absolutely regale myself at times on the recollection of some of the first-rate artists that I have met in the field. I have often before me the persons and performances of the two Oldakers, as I saw them with Mr. Combe’s hounds in the Vale of White Horse, and I regret to think that there is no chance of my seeing one of them (Henry) again, as he has taken leave of hounds from ill health. They were capital horsemen—in short, every thing that could be wished for, and capital sportsmen as well. Robert, has since hunted the hounds kept by Mr. Sebright, formerly Lady Salisbury’s. I never saw the celebrated old Tom Oldaker, their father, in the field, which I lament, as I have reason to believe he was a good specimen of an English sportsman. As a horseman, perhaps, he might now be considered slow.

Having never, that I can recollect, seen Mr. Henry Oxenden in the field, my list in O falls short. Mr. Smythe Owen, of the Shropshire, is what was called a neat horseman; but there was a namesake of his, a first cousin to Mr. Mytton—Captain Owen, of Woodhouse, who appeared to me likely to make one of the

* A song written on the Oakley hunt.

best riders in Shropshire. But hold hard ! am I going to omit the most wonderful of all O's in the world—aye, more wonderful than Osbaldeston himself ? My readers shall determine. I once spent a pleasant week with Mr. Yeatman in Dorsetshire, during which time I hunted three days with his hounds and once with Mr. Farquharson's, but the results of my visit were not made public. As we were one day drawing a cover with the former gentleman's hounds, my notice was attracted to a respectably dressed farmer of the old school, more than commonly attentive to the passing scene. I made inquiry as to the man, and you shall now have his history, not on my authority alone, but on that of several of the gentlemen of Mr. Yeatman's hunt. His name they told me was Oliver, and, strange to say, he rode a stone-blind mare two seasons with the fox-hounds in that country, and was never very far behind, neither did he get many falls !!! Surely this sentence is worthy of the triple note of admiration which I have involuntarily affixed to it ; and more especially when I describe the kind of country the Blackmore Vale is composed of, which may not be known to many of my readers. Two out of six of the fences are double, the ditches generally deep and wide, and too frequently there is but a small allowance of footing for the horse, from which he has to take his second spring. There is also a good deal of timber, but that, as I shall show, must have been the easiest fence for the blind mare. The most miraculous part of the story, however, is yet to come. If any country in England requires a double set of eyes, in men and horses, it is this said Vale of Blackmore, a serious objection to it in my eyes. The reason is this. The meadows are, one half of them, what is called open drained, and, from the richness of the land, the fog-grass is not withered by the time hunting is half over ; and these drains are nearly as " blind," as the term is, as the old mare herself was. For my own part I consider them the bane of an otherwise very pretty country, and several awkward falls were occasioned by them in my presence—General Gilbert's, particularly so, his horse going at nearly full speed when he fell. Now, how did farmer Oliver pilot the old mare over such a country as this ? I might as well ask myself, how did Jonas live three days in the whale's belly ? but we are equally bound to believe both stories, for—not meaning an indecent comparison, British sportsmen are incapable of fabricating an uncalled-for falsehood. I do certainly remember, many years back, my old acquaintance and infallible doctor,* Mr. Minster, of Cheltenham, having a very fine old grey hunter stone blind ; and when visiting his patients he would often cross the country, by the foot-paths, leaping the stone stiles with

* The winter previously to my quitting England, I went to Cheltenham to have a fortnight's hunting with Lord Segrave's hounds. An awful sore throat laid me on my back after the third day, and in return for a good cure by Mr. Minster, I sent him a set of the Leicestershire Steeple-chase.



YELLOWHAM WOOD, DORSET. *Drawn by W. P. HODGES; engraved by HENRY ALKEN and R. G. REEVE, 1834. The print lent by Messrs. Fores.*

ease and safety : neither does my story end here. Being in company one day with a dashing young farmer who boasted of the feats *his* horse could perform, the doctor took the shine out of him on the instant, by proposing a wager, that he had a horse in *his* stable which could take a leap his horse could not take. "Where shall we go to decide the bet?" said the farmer, who of course said "Done." "*Only into the street*," replied the other. Consequently the doctor was mounted on the blind horse in a trice, when, giving him the office by the bit (and, as Horace says, *there lies the horse's ear*), he made him believe a stone stile was before him, and he took a spring that would have cleared the highest in the parish, to the no small discomfiture of the farmer. Clever as was this feat, it yields to that of the Dorset yeoman handing the old mare, without seeing them, over the awkward fences and grass-covered drains of the Blackmore Vale, and through "the blind mazes of the tangled wood."

I cannot commence my next list with a name more respected by fox-hunters than that of the late Earl Plymouth, who was gathered to his fathers at such short notice. But what of that? The man who leaves such a character behind him, in the country in which he resided, as Lord Plymouth did—just in his dealings, beneficent to his tenantry, useful to his country, and good to the poor—although a fox-hunter, need not fear being called to his account upon any day or at any hour. But I am now to speak of his lordship as a horseman ; and here I must not withhold the panegyric due to him, although it can never meet his eye. He was undoubtedly amongst the first class of the first riders to hounds in Leicestershire, and his stud of hunters—generally consisting of a score—were as good as money could procure, and of this he was not sparing in his purchases of such as he thought would suit him. Of late years they were almost all thorough-bred. Indeed his style of riding required good breeding, for he would go the pace.

A friend of mine was out one day in the season 1825 with Lord Lonsdale's hounds, and saw a gallant performance by Mr. T. A. Smith. He (my friend) happened to be in a situation to view the fox whilst the pack were at fault, and awaited their coming to him with the scent. He had been previously amusing himself with examining a fence which he conceived to be *a stopper*, and was meditating within himself whether it were practicable or not, and whether any one would attempt to ride at it. Mr. Smith came first away with the hounds, and, without appearing to look at it, put his horse's head straight for it, and cleared it all. Lord Plymouth followed him, and, by breaking the second rail (for there were, first a ditch, then a rail, then *another* ditch, and then *another* rail !) enabled my friend to follow him.

Lord Plymouth struck me as a man not riding for fame, but for the purpose

of seeing hounds, and, if not in the first flight, was almost always near enough to enjoy a good run, and I may say eight times in ten he had the cream of it. Without seeking fences, he was seldom stopped by the largest : and, from the many years' experience of the country, he knew how to ride over Leicestershire. And then recollect how he was horsed, and what condition his horses showed ! Not eleven stone on their backs then, and picking the flowers of studs—that is to say, purchasing almost every very *superior* horse of his stamp that was to be purchased—his lordship threw no chance away that could contribute towards placing him in the front. Of this fact I am reminded when sitting at my own fire-side, and looking at the portrait of Assheton, which he bought of Mr. Osbaldeston—after having carried either himself or his men for at least six seasons—for the sum of four hundred guineas. Assheton was one of the queer-tempered ones, and took a deal of “making,” as we term the education of a hunter, but those queer ones are generally good when once they are made. That fine horseman Dick Burton had the handling of him for some time ; but the day that sold him was that on which he carried “the Squire,” so brilliantly, from the Coplow to Ranksbro', with a second fox, after having had a good dressing with the first. In the words of an old sportsman—“a better heart and bottom than Assheton's never went into the field.” In the fine picture Ferneley painted for Mr. Osbaldeston, giving a faithful representation of this fine run *over the finest country in the world*, he (Mr. O.) is seen topping a flight of rails, upon Assheton, by the side of Mr. Holyoake, upon Crossbow, checking the hounds at the time, whilst some of the leading Melton men are in equally enviable places.

No man is better entitled to a front-rank place amongst British horsemen than Sir Henry Peyton—not the meteor of a day, but shining with equal lustre through a long succession of seasons, and he still remains a star. Driven from England by the proprietor of a sporting magazine which I was the making of, I can only now repeat what I hear, and this is, that when hounds run hard, this accomplished sportsman is still as near to them as he should be, and no more need be said. But as we do not often come across such artists as Sir Henry, and as I have seen so much of his performance, I must not dismiss him without attempting to give a sketch of him in his saddle. I will do it to the best of my ability ; but we scribblers are now and then brought to check for terms, when describing persons signaling themselves in the same pursuits, yet varying in the grades of merit. I will, however, on this occasion, borrow a word from the seaman's vocabulary, and call Sir Henry Peyton an “able-bodied” horseman in the first instance, by reason of my never having seen a stronger man in a saddle than himself. But I must not stop here, and yet I need not dwell on his excellent nerve in all kinds of difficulties which

hard riding men have to contend with. But I must bear record of his fine judgment in riding to hounds, having ever considered him one of the quickest to get away, and the best selector of his ground in chase when away, that I have seen in the field. Whether it be from the rough woodlands of the Bicester Vale, or the more agreeable gorse covers of Chipping Warden hills, he is sure to be with them before four fields have been crossed, and once with them, he is landed. Now, adding all these good qualities together—the quick eye, the cool judgment, undaunted nerve, and fine hand, nothing more is wanting to complete the portrait of a perfect horseman.

By the way, speaking of portraits, I remember two particular instances of eye and hand in this distinguished sportsman. The first occurred to my notice as I was making my way up a wet furrow of a ploughed field, *fetlock deep*, with my horse somewhat distressed. Hearing a rustling noise on my right, I espied Sir Henry *fighting his way up a dry ditch the bottom of which was sound*. The other was a fine display of hand in jumping a brook and a rail, on his grey-tailed horse Hermit. There was a *very small* space for the horse to land upon, between the brook and the rail, and nothing but the most delicate handling could have enabled him to rise at the latter. It was on this occasion—or rather from the attitude in which I saw him—that I ventured to tell him, I wished an artist had been present to have sketched himself and his horse. But I have not done yet. Among other wrinkles obtained from Sir Henry, the following has frequently been of use to me. “Whenever,” said he, “you come to a brook too wide to jump *over*, but which you are obliged to jump *into*, and you suspect the bottom of it to be soft, do so as quietly as you can if you wish to avoid a fall. It will enable your horse to get a fulcrum from his hinder legs before he springs to regain the opposite bank, and he has then a better chance of landing you than if he went boring headlong through it.” I need scarcely add, that Sir Henry has always been well mounted, having an eye to strength as well as blood; for weedy horses, however well-bred, have no chance in Oxfordshire—at least in that part of it which he rides over. To show, however, that his object has been to get to hounds, regardless of petty objections, he gave four hundred guineas for Saladin, having only one eye! Sir Henry’s weight, with his saddle, is about thirteen stone.*

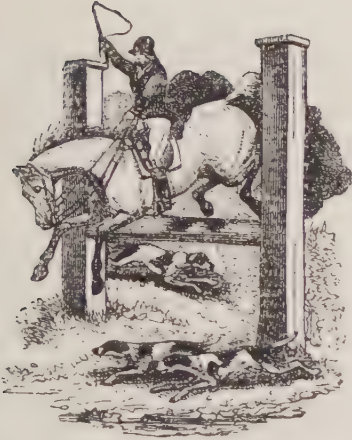
From all that has been said, and all that has been seen of Sir Henry Peyton,

* Superiority of horsemanship shows itself very early in life. Sir Henry and myself are about of an age, and I remember, when we were boys, his coming on horseback to my father’s house, when I was told to “*observe how he sat his horse*.” As my father was a better judge of a writer than a rider, there must have been something striking to have attracted his notice. I little thought then, that we should so often travel together over a country.

it is nothing surprising that he should be the sire of one of the *very best* riders of the present or of any former period. Mr. Peyton, or “Young Peyton”—a name he acquired when at Christchurch—became signal very early in life, himself and Lord Forester being “the two best men out of Oxford,” as the term is, when alluding to the road or field; and it was generally acknowledged that they bade fair, one day or other, each to eclipse his father’s fame. Now I scarcely know what to say of, or how to describe, this same Mr. Peyton. Were I to declare that, from all I have seen and all I have read of him, he is the boldest and best horseman England ever produced, I should be afraid of looking upon the wall and seeing Assheton Smith, John White, and half a score more crack names staring me in the face, and “hold hard, Nimrod,” in big letters. But really, taking him over the country and over the course, he must be as near excellence as human ability and physical energies can place any one. When do we hear of a run, when this artist is out, that he does not get to the end of it—be the distance and pace what they may? Look back to Lord Lichfield’s great day, when his lordship, one of the best men then going, got nearly to the end of that awful run at the expense of two tired horses and one dead one. *Peyton saw him killed on his Edgocot mare.* Then look at his performances in steeple-chases, or over the race-course! Why he almost always rides the winner; and I am glad to find that, when contending for the prize on the latter ground, he has taken a leaf out of Sam Chifney’s book—*never to be in a hurry to get home.*



CHAPTER X



OW often have I lamented having resided ten years in that slowest of all slow counties, Hampshire, instead of pitching my tent northward, whence I could have visited Leicestershire every successive season. When we consider that the county of Hants, as it is called, contains more than one million, two hundred thousand acres of land, we are no longer surprised at its finding room for six packs of fox-hounds ; namely, Mr. Villebois's, the Vine, Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith's, the Hambledon, Sir John Cope's, and the New Forest, all of which, with the exception of Sir John Cope's and Mr. Smith's,

are confined to this county alone. As a hunting country, however, Hampshire is far from first-rate, being for the most part under the plough ; and in addition to this disadvantage the stratum of soil is thin over the larger portion of the county, and consequently unfavourable to scent. The flints also, which cover the surface over, I may say, two-thirds of it, are always injurious to hounds and often fatal to horses, cutting the sinews of the leg in sunder ; moreover it abounds in sheep and sheep-dogs, the best friends to foxes chased by hounds, but very inimical to sport. Plough-teams are likewise to be seen in at least one field out of four, causing foxes to be driven from their points, and the covers are large and rough ; added to all this, immense hedge-rows are kept on the farms, for the sake of fuel, which is scarce, and these are exceedingly baffling to hounds. In short, it may be said to labour under many serious disadvantages.

As coming first on our road from the Metropolis we will commence with Sir John Cope's hounds, which hunted a small part of Hampshire in the immediate neighbourhood of their kennel, which is at Bramshill, the seat of their owner, just within the county. Nothing can be worse than the Hampshire country hunted by this pack, but that rather adds to the merit of the gentleman who had the spirit to hunt it, which he did with, I believe, a very small subscription. It

would be uninteresting to my readers to dwell upon this part of Hampshire, which partakes of a sort of Cimmerian darkness in November—immense hedges, deep and blind ditches, extensive covers, and bad foxes. The only place in it likely to show a run was Dogmersfield-park, the seat of the Mildmays, from whence a fox can get on the Warnborough hills and lead the chase over a part of the open country, hunted by Mr. Villebois. The Duke of Wellington's covers at Strathfield-Saye, and those of Mr. Tilney Long Wellesley, were drawn by these hounds, and are all in the county of Hants.

As connected with Hampshire sporting the following recorded fact may be entitled to a place here. In 1620, the then Archbishop of Canterbury had the misfortune to occasion the death of a keeper, by his cross-bow, whilst hunting in Bramshill Park, and to expiate the homicide (as was the good custom of those days) he founded a hospital at Guildford for the maintenance of unmarried paupers. It seems archbishops hunted in those by-gone days—an amusement which the morbid sanctity of the present times has attempted to deny even to a curate. But let us have none of this swallowing camels and straining at gnats ! Nature herself has directed us to the chase, and I could bring a long string of authorities—*authorities revered by the church*—who recommend the sports of the field as a relaxation of pious labours. Quere. Are men better now than they were then ? I think not.

Mr. Villebois's hunt was by far the most extensive in Hampshire, affording four regular days, and most commonly five. It joined the countries of Sir John Cope and the Vine, near Basingstoke, and those of the Hambledon, Mr. Assheton Smith's and the New Forest being chiefly in the very heart of the county. The kennel was at Armsworth, a small village, three miles from Alresford and ten from Winchester, and where the worthy master of the pack had his domicile. He had a very large kennel of hounds, divided into two packs—one consisting of the larger hounds and the other of the smaller, and they took the field on alternate days. They were hunted by that well-known huntsman, Richard Foster, who had been many years with Mr. Villebois, and was looked upon as one of the first woodland huntsmen of present times. Indeed his experience in cover-hunting had been great, for in some parts of his present country his hounds were oftener in cover than out.

Mr. Villebois had another kennel at Hursley, between Winchester and Romsey, where he went twice in the season, and always finished there. It is a rough uncouth country, and an antidote to enjoyment of hounds, but useful in cub-hunting and in the spring, as affording rest to the better covers. Whilst the hounds sojourned at Hursley, Mr. Villebois, accompanied by a few friends, took

up his quarters at the head inn of Romsey, which was handy enough for his fixtures.

The country hunted by the Hampshire Hounds—as those of Mr. Villebois were called, although he kept them entirely at his own expense—rough as parts of it are, is more like a fox-hunting country than that hunted by the Vine pack. In the first place, there are some fences in all parts of it, and stiff ones in most ; and in the next, it is so roomy that no part of it is persecuted by the hounds coming too quick upon covers, the cause of many blank days. It was, for the most part, uncommonly well off for foxes, an excellent understanding having always existed between the master and the farmers—the best security for their preservation. His Farmers' Hunt races, on Abbotstone Downs, and the dinner afterwards, at which he presided himself, made scores of friends to fox-hunting, and among many who never partook of the sport.

The favourite meet in the Hampshire Hunt is Thorny Down, a circular cover on a commanding situation, about six miles from Alresford. A most excellent and animating song was made many years back on this favourite spot by Mr. Paulet, when he had the hounds. The first, fifth, and sixth verses are so good that I shall give them as a specimen of a sportsman's muse, and I can assure my readers that I have listened with the greatest delight to this enlivening ballad.

“Free from care, from pain, from sorrow,
Haste to Thorny Down to-morrow ;
There shall our steeds outstrip the wind ;
While time and age creep far behind.
No long vigils of love we keep,
Nor evening's cups protract our sleep,
But ere the sun has reached the skies,
Fresh as the morn we gladly rise.

Chorus.

“Then free from care, from pain, from sorrow,
Haste to Thorny Down to-morrow.

Fifth Verse.

“Check'd by sheep's stain in the valley,
Men of weight gain time to rally :
Mopping his front and double chin,
Each heavy blue * comes puffing in.
Juniper hits it down the way—
Magpies and crows his point betray ;
Through the wet mead and chalky soil
The villain runs his tainted foil.

Chorus.

“Then free from care,” &c.

* Blue was the uniform colour of the hunt.

Sixth Verse.

"Distress'd at length he gains the village
 Where of late he roamed for pillage ;
 'Midst his old haunts he finds no friend,
 And Joe's whoo-hoop proclaims his end.
 My rhymes are done ; once more excuse
 Your ancient Laureat's limping muse ;
 And here, in Dian's joyous court,
Drink, in full cups, the noble sport !

Chorus.

"Then free from care, &c."

But having quoted from one sportsman's muse we should not omit mentioning that Mr. Lowth, the author of Billesdon Coplow poem (son of the learned Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London), was a member of the Hampshire Hunt, and greatly distinguished for his classical attainments at Oxford. He thus describes *himself* in the poem :—

"An H. H. who in Leicestershire never had been,
 So *of course* such a tickler ne'er could have seen,
 Just to see them throw off, on a raw horse was mounted,
 Who a hound had ne'er seen or a fence had confronted.
 But they found in such style, and went off at such score,
 That he could not resist the attempt to see more ;
 So with scrambling, and dashing, and one rattling fall,
 He saw all the fun up to Stretton's White Hall.
 There they anchor'd, in plight not a little distressing,
 The horse being *raw* he of course got a *dressing*."

Not content with showing himself up in not the most flattering light as a rider to hounds (he was one of the best race-riders of his day), he jocularly adds the following note :—"It is not quite clear whether the initials H. H. are meant to apply to a Hampshire hog, or the Hampshire Hunt. If to the hog, it does not appear that *he saved his bacon*."

Very little more can be said of the H. H. country, further than that it was uncommonly well-hunted by Mr. Villebois, and,—which is no small consideration with a sportsman,—everything done in a truly sportsmanlike style. It is, taken altogether, severe for horses, in consequence of the prevalence of ploughed land, always deep after frost : and there is a good deal of fencing, but no brooks but what are fordable. It is far from favourable to scent, which, according to Foster's experience of it, is never to be depended upon but after wet nights, with wind to the northward of west. The hounds have always been well attended in the field ; indeed, some years back more so than most others in England—a hundred well-mounted gentlemen being an almost *every day's* complement at all their best covers.

The H. H., or Hampshire Hunt country, is one of some antiquity in the annals of hunting countries. Mr. Paulet, of King's Somborne, had it before Mr. Villebois, who hunted it upwards of twenty years. "Squire Ridge," or "Tom Ridge," as he was generally called, had it before Mr. Paulet, and a good old sportsman was he. About a dozen or fifteen neighbouring gentlemen subscribed their ten pounds each towards expenses, and dined together, in the old fashioned style, once a fortnight, at Popham Lane Inn on the London and Winchester road.

Mr. Villebois's establishment was on the first scale, consisting of two packs of hounds and at least twenty horses, all at his own expense, and everything is done upon system. Although the greater part of the country is rough and woodland, a small track called the "Hartley country" is a very pleasant one to ride over. Indeed, several of the fixtures in the neighbourhood of Alresford are such as any sportsman should be content with, in a country not first-rate. But he must not regard a scratched face : he must take a lesson from Foster how to make his way through covers (for I think Foster is the best hand at this work I ever saw), and he must not lose sight of the hounds if he can help it. He must ride a well-bred horse, that "can go upon wind," as the term is ; he should be a good timber leaper, and strong in deep ground ; his pasterns should be short, and the hair encouraged to grow on his heels—the two latter qualities being the best protection against flints.

The next in my list is the Hambledon, a rough, uncouth country, abounding with woods and forests, but the best in Hampshire for hounds. It is of fair extent, quite equal to three days a week, and well supplied with foxes.

A celebrated yeoman of the name of Laund once hunted this country, and after him Colonel De Burgh (afterwards Lord Clanricarde), whose kennel was at Droxford, on the London and Gosport road. The Colonel was a gallant soldier, and distinguished himself under the late Duke of York in Holland, but he could not ride to his hounds. Old Laund, as he was called, was a capital sportsman of the old school, and amongst many others the following anecdote is related of him :—The late Duke of Richmond, uncle to the present Duke, had in his (old Laund's) day, an excellent pack of fox-hounds at Goodwood, hunted by the famous Tom Grant. It so happened that both packs met one day at the same cover, each party laying claim to it. The Duke became angry, when the other thus addressed him :—"It's no use, my Lord, to put yourself in a passion. I've just throw'd 'em in, and if there's a fox in the cover they'll find him, and between us both we shall kill him. But, if your Grace puts yourself in such a passion, *as I hunted this cover before you was born, I shall hunt it after you are dead.*" Sir Bellingham Graham and Mr. Osbaldeston also hunted this country whilst waiting to get possession of

such as were better, and the latter was succeeded by Mr. Smith, since of the Pytchley. It was likewise hunted by the hounds of the late Mr. Nunes, Mr. John Walker, and Mr. Shard, and the kennel and stables at Hill Place, near Droxford, were built by Sir Bellingham Graham.

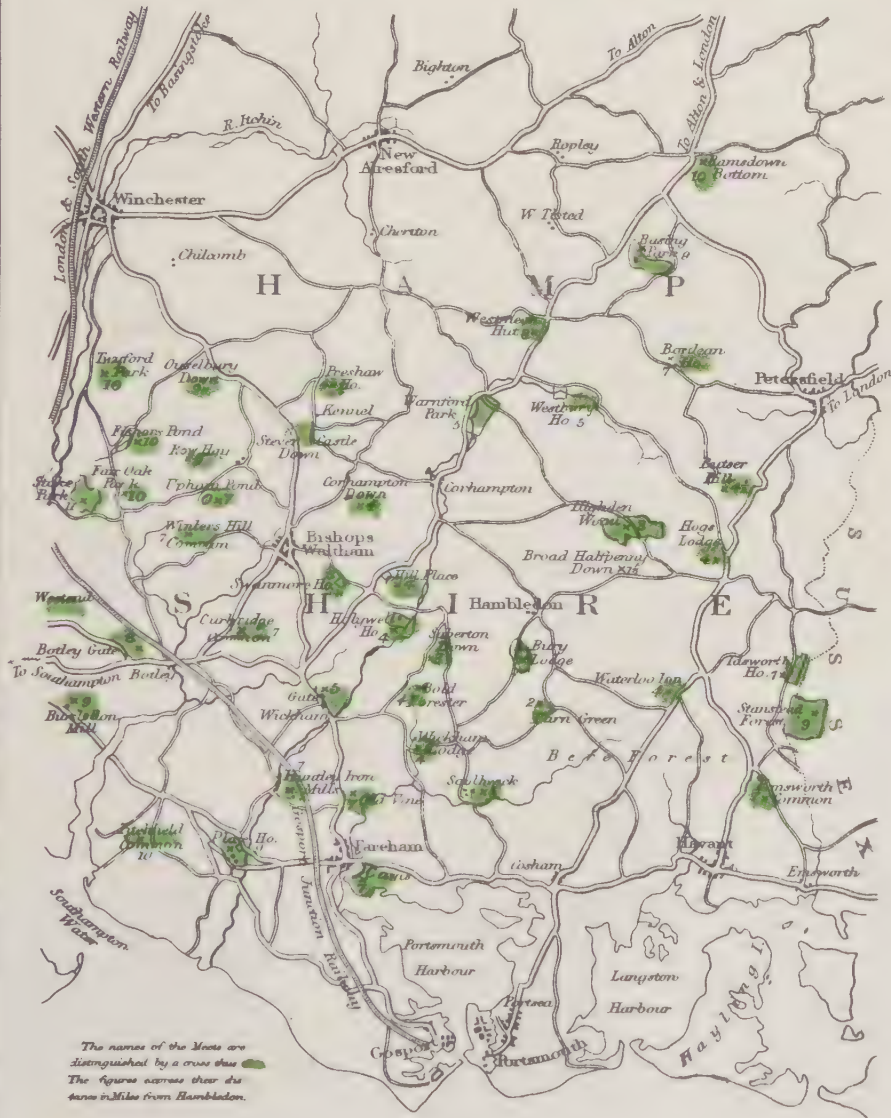
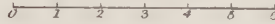
In by-gone days several packs hunted parts of what is now called the Hambleton country. Among these was one kept by a Lord Stowel, whose country reached from Guildford to Alton, hunting also Chawton Park, Mr. Knight's, afterward in Mr. Villebois's hunt. His lordship resided, and had his kennel, at the Government-house in Holt Forest, which was a grant from the government to his father. He also hunted Wolmer Forest, and thence on to Farnham. Lord Egremont likewise hunted the left hand of the Portsmouth road when Mr. Ridge claimed the right. Going still further back, a Mr. Evelyn, a Kentish gentleman, hunted Hampshire, having his kennel at Armsworth, where Mr. Villebois resided, and another at his seat in Kent, near Wrotham. He rode a famous grey stallion, talked of in these parts to the present day, and which covered half the mares in the country, but we may doubt his being so honoured were he to make his appearance again. Stag-hounds were also kept in great style in our Prince Regent's days, if we may use such a term, at Up Park, in this county, the magnificent seat of Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh; and in later days his Royal Highness had hounds at Kempshot Park, between Basingstoke and Winchester.

The Hambleton country was never better hunted than by Mr. Smith, since of the Pytchley, who showed extraordinary sport in it with a very small subscription. Without, however, taking ought from the merit of Mr. Smith as a sportsman—he having hunted the hounds himself—I account for part of that extraordinary sport by the fact of his covers having had two years' rest, by the country having been vacant, and consequently producing a more than usual share of *old* foxes, which took a great deal of killing. It would be well if masters of hounds would take a hint from this circumstance, and not kill down their foxes so closely as they do, for the sake of blooding their hounds, a point, in my opinion, of very minor consideration. There are races every year on Soberton Downs, and no lack of foxes in the Hambleton country, which, as has been before observed, is the best part of Hampshire for scent, but deep and distressing for horses, and very strongly fenced. There is, however, a large portion of maiden down in various parts of it, over which hounds generally run merrily.

There being upwards of one hundred thousand acres of what is called waste land in Hampshire exclusive of forests, it may be concluded that there is plenty of room for cub-hunting. In the Hambleton country is Waltham Chase, the property of the Bishop of Winchester, containing two hundred acres, and well

MAP OF THE M E E T S OF THE H A M B L E D O N H O U N D S.

Scale of English Miles



stocked with foxes ; and adjoining it is the forest of Bere, which once consisted of sixteen thousand acres. In the neighbourhood of Botley, near Southampton, likewise, are several very large woods, good for spring hunting. Considering then that a fair proportion of this country is sufficiently open to enjoy hounds in, and that the whole of it is favourable to scent, it is one by no means to be lightly esteemed in the eye of a real sportsman. For horses, as I have before remarked, it is a severe one ; and if a hunter will carry his rider well up to hounds, from any of Sir S. Jervoise's covers, *over the Telegraph hills*, and see the fox killed eight miles beyond, he need not be afraid of showing his face in any of the crack countries. The best covers are in the neighbourhood of Waltham, Durley, Rowheig, Twyford Park, and some others running parallel with the London and Gosport road. Mr. King, when he hunted this country, had very good sport, and gave satisfaction to all parties.

The Vine country commences at Tadley Forest, close on the borders of Berkshire, and, extending to Kingsclear on the right, pursues its course to Laverstock, between Overton and Andover, being bounded on the left by the London and Winchester road, which in no instance does it cross. The distance from point to point does not exceed twenty miles, but it is pretty square, and consequently more roomy than it appears to be, and quite equal to three days a week. It is, however, divided into two classes,—viz. A small portion of woodland extending right and left of the first four or five miles of it, taking it in a straight direction ; bounded on the left, by the Reading and Basingstoke road, and on the right by the Kingsclear hills. This is a rough, bad tract of country, thickly studded with covers, but holding a good scent. The hill-country commences a mile beyond the Vine Mansion House, the seat of the late owner of the pack, and from which they take their name, and extends right and left to the extremity of the limits of the hunt.

The hill country presents a variety of soils, but by far the greater portion a flinty surface to a thin staple, on a chalky subsoil ; and the vallies, which are narrow, afford a treat to the eye, of well arranged water-meadows, clothed in nearly perpetual green. They—the water-meadows—are awkward to cross, at speed, from the quantity of small channels for the water, and often occasion over-reaches, and sometimes worse accidents to horses. There are, however, fewer of these channels on the Vine country than in most of the others of Hampshire, and the fewer the better for the sportsman, as they baffle hounds, owing to the material alteration of the scent—being from bad to good, and consequently, from good to bad.

The Hampshire hills are seldom the scene of straightforward runs ; but when Mr. Paulet had the country, previous to Mr. Chute, a striking exception

was experienced. Freefolk Wood, the property of J. Portal, Esq., the outside cover of the hill country, produced a breed of foxes that almost invariably made their point for the Sherborne Woodlands, at least fifteen miles distant, and very splendid runs were the result. This cover has ever since retained its celebrity for sport ; and, certainly, if a fox is good enough to fly from it, his life, or a run for it, must be had, for the country is open to him for miles, with nothing strong enough to hide his head in. But it is an unsatisfactory country round it to a sportsman, mounted on what we call a hunter, for there is not a fence within miles of it, and he has, first, the mortification of seeing the hounds pressed upon to their hinderance, and, again, having the dirt flung in his face by a school-boy on a well-bred galloway, who has the best chance to get across it,—for it is often deep and sticky. The other most favourite fixtures in the Vine hunt are Nutley Wood, four miles from Overton ; St. John's Wood, two miles from Basingstoke, on the great western road ; Ashe, and Manydown Parks, not far distant. The great Dean Woods are also a certain find.

On the decease of Mr. Chute, the Vine country was taken by Mr. Abraham Pole, brother of Sir Peter Pole, Bart., who built kennels and stables at his seat near Basingstoke, but he only hunted it two seasons, when he returned to his hunting-box in Warwickshire. Indeed it is due to him to say, that, never having been master of hounds before, he merely took the management of the Vine pack until a successor to Mr. Chute could be procured. Fortunately for the country, it was found in the person of Mr. Henry Fellowes (brother to Mr. Fellowes, who hunted Warwickshire), who is at this time at their head. Mr. Fellowes is no *professor of science*, but, in every other respect, well qualified for a master, and in popularity he stands deservedly high. His subscription is about £800 per annum, and his kennel and stables are at Overton, quite in the centre of the country.

The Vine hounds were hunted by Richard Adamson, who formerly lived with Lord Scarborough, and once in the service of Mr. Musters. He was a very valuable servant, an excellent horseman, and what may be called a fair average huntsman in the field. In the kennel he was undeniably good, always bringing his hounds out in condition, and by the exercise of his own judgment and that of others, their character was very greatly improved. The Vine country is admirably adapted to sportsmen whose hard riding days are gone by, as they may have much enjoyment of hounds without being called upon to leap, the greater part of it being open. The fences in the woodlands, however, are strong, but they are not hunted more than one day in a fortnight.

A new hunting country has lately been formed in Hants, and occupied by the hounds of Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq., who was for so many years at the head of

the Quorn. His kennel is at Tidworth House (his residence), a few miles from Andover, on the road from Hungerford to Salisbury, and amongst others, contains the hounds this celebrated sportsman purchased from Sir Richard Sutton, for one thousand guineas. I often wonder how this gentleman submits to the change, from the green grass-grounds, and the four-acre gorse-covers of Leicestershire, to Dowles Great Wood (seventeen-hundred acres, I believe), or the almost impenetrable recesses of Collingbourn Ducis Woodlands. But there is no small charm attached to hunting from home.

From the roaring of the lion to the raven's croak—from bold Robin Hood to the babes in the wood—there has ever been an interesting, I should rather say a quixotic association of ideas, when we find ourselves in the midst of a forest. No where in England then, can fancy be allowed a wider range than in our own New Forest, which forms so grand a feature in Hampshire, as a hunting country. Its picturesque beauty may perhaps go for nothing with the sportsman, but the enormities * of the monarch who made it a forest, the pestilential blast that *is said* to have killed his son when hunting in it ; the blood of Rufus which once stained its soil ; the wretched villains by whom it was then trodden, in abject submission to the feudal lord ; and though last, not least, the chivalrous Knights-Templars who once honoured it by their presence, must crowd upon the mind of every man who has at all looked into books.

But I am going out of my line. The New Forest was formerly of much greater extent than it is at present, the circumference having been stated at nearly one hundred miles ; its value as hunting ground has likewise been much deteriorated by the enclosures which government have effected in the centre of it, destroying the finest feature of it—*its wildness*. These enclosures are likewise extremely awkward to draw, although there are plenty of rides cut through them. The lying is so strong (gorse, black-thorn, &c.) that, particularly after a certain hour in the day, hounds do not care to go far into them, unless accompanied by their huntsman, and this is difficult by reason of the blind drains with which they abound. Then what is to be done ? In case of a fox slipping quickly away, it is dangerous for a huntsman to accompany them *dismounted*, as he may never catch his hounds ; on the other hand, if he holloas them in from the rides, half of them will not obey the holloa, but remain at his horse's heels. What then, I repeat, is to be done ? Why a whipper-in is generally sent into these covers, *on foot*, encouraging the

* I am aware that the Monkish historians have egregiously overstepped the limits of probability, in recounting the "enormities" here alluded to ; but, as the Rev. Mr. Warner justly observes, the epithet *new* cannot be mistaken. *Some person* depopulated this great tract of country, doubtless, at that time, very thinly inhabited, and we fear our first William was a merciless preserver of game. But the wise and sagacious Henry the First punished the murderer and the poacher with equal severity—the *halter*.

hounds, to draw them, and this succeeds well. The plan originated with Mr. Nicoll.

Although the New Forest is esteemed fair scenting ground by the nature of it, and rendered still more favourable to hounds by aid of the side scent it affords them, by foxes brushing the ling as they pass through it, yet it offers sundry trying difficulties to hounds, and to hunt it well, a huntsman must know it well. As to his hounds being steady from deer, we of course calculate upon that, although the half-starved appearance of many of these animals, and their seeming inability to get away from them, render them tempting to pull down. But hounds, to distinguish themselves in the New Forest, must be extremely handy and quick in turning (their game rarely running straight), and they should pack well together, as they are seldom out of sight of the field. For horses it is distressing in the winter, for although there is no fencing (which would be a relief to them, inasmuch as it would abate the pace of the hounds), the ground in the open is dreadfully deep, as most forests are, from the total absence of drains. In the April month, however, it generally rides well, and I need not inform my readers that it is *then* seen to advantage, a large assemblage of sportsmen appearing in it from several other hunts.

Were it not for boughs of trees and bogs, the forest would be a fine field to display hounds in, as a well mounted sportsman need never be far from their sterns. But without the trees, the picturesque effect would be destroyed, for it is in the ever shifting scenes of the forest that its greatest beauty lies. At one moment we see the pack flinging to catch the scent, where the fox has made his turnings in the brakes ; at another, streaming away over the open, with a distant brake in view. Now a red deer passing majestically in their front, and then a fallow doe, with a fawn perhaps at her side, jumping up out of the underwood, each unnoticed by the pack. But the great merit of the New Forest is, that hounds can hunt there when they can hunt no where else ; on the other hand, they are subject to foot lameness, to the great mortification of their owners.

The New Forest has been hunted by several conspicuous sportsmen. Among them was the late Mr. Gilbert, whose huntsman was old Tom Sebright, father to Lord Fitzwilliam's huntsman, who ranked so high in his calling ; the late Mr. Compton, of the Manor-house, near Lyndhurst, also hunted it, as likewise did Mr. Warde, for several successive seasons. Mr. Warde was succeeded by Mr. Nicoll (whose quitting it in the prime of his days was a national loss), and he was followed by Mr. Wyndham. Perhaps no hunting country in England can boast of the extraordinary degree of harmony and good fellowship that has existed among the frequenters of this hunt for the last sixty years, and long may it continue to distinguish it ! Death has put his hand upon many of them, the times have dis-

mounted others ; but let the example of such as remain operate upon the rising generation, for fox-hunting and good fellowship should be inseparable.

I will, then, conclude my account of Hampshire, as a hunting country ; perhaps no county in England is more diversified than it is, every variety of hill and dale, aspect and soil, being to be found within its bounds ; we have chalks, clays, sands, sheep-walks, downs, bogs, heaths, open fields, and woodlands, which cannot but furnish an ample opportunity to the sportsman of determining the merits of each. On the whole, however, it is a country that requires a low scenting hound, quite steady to his game, for it abounds in riot, and he is often out of sight of his huntsman ; he must also stand well on his legs, with good cat-like feet, as it tries both legs and feet, owing to so much of its surface being stony. On this account, then, another disadvantage arises, namely : hounds are often obliged to lie by, in consequence of being cut by the flints, and we know the bad effects of that ; they are also too often pressed upon by the horsemen, in chase, and driven beyond the scent. Taken altogether, however, and estimating the value of the New Forest in the spring, when all other countries are cut up, a man, with a strong stable of horses, and determined to be in the field, may have his heart's content of fox-hunting in Hampshire.

For reasons already assigned, it is not in my power to say any thing of Sir Lawrence Palk, Lord Pollington, and others. It is true I have seen the former with hounds, when he lived at Dalby, near Melton, where he resided some years ; and I have heard that Lord Pollington was very good, but I never saw his Lordship in the field. Sir John Paul I have seen, and Mr. Payne ; the latter, at one period, as well mounted as any man in Leicestershire—I allude to the days of Panza, The Sheriff, Latitat, Cottager, &c., all first-rate nags. Mr. Payne is a very hard rider, but his passion is for racing. I remember seeing his stud once at Sulby—and a superb one it was—consisting of thirty horses, hunters and hacks, and not one lame one amongst them. A story is on record, but I won't answer for the truth of it, that, when mounted on Panza, with Sir Holyoake Goodricke alongside him on the Sheriff, they, in a contest for superiority, went half a mile neck and neck over the country *after* the hounds had killed their fox ! I remember Mr. Payne going capitably the first forty minutes of Lord Lichfield's splendid run, from Croft's Mill to Bradgate Park.

Some years since I was in the habit of seeing a good deal of Mr. Parker, who has since been the manager of two packs of fox-hounds. When I knew him he was the occupier of a large farm in Worcestershire, but I often told him he mistook his calling. " You ought," said I, " to withdraw your capital from agriculture, and take up your abode in Leicestershire ; but you must not speculate upon

screws, as I perceive you now do. Purchase good *young* horses, and, with your style of riding, you'll soon make a fortune by them." Now I appeal to all sportsmen who knew Mr. Parker at the period I am alluding to, if my notion of him was not a correct one. He rode rather heavy, it is true, but by care and attention to the state and condition of his person he would not have exceeded thirteen stone, with his saddle, and his weight would have told in the golden scales ; for if a horse can go well with a heavy man, he is sure to go better with a lighter one—horsemanship being nearly at par. This much, however, I can say of Mr. Parker, that, next to Mr. Charles Boulton, I consider him the best *man* on a bad hunter—indeed, on no hunter at all—that I ever saw. I say "man," because Bradley's Harry was a boy ; and I never saw Dick Christian on any thing that could not be called a hunter. The seat and hand of Mr. Parker appeared to be perfect as to giving assistance to a horse over a deep country like Worcestershire ; and for nerve, I need not go beyond the fact of my seeing him ride an old groggy horse over a good gate, *in a very hard frost* !

It is rather a singular fact, that in the same county with Mr. Parker (Worcestershire to wit) was another eminent sportsman and most accomplished horseman, who I have a hundred times wished had taken up his abode in the grass countries, as his style of riding to hounds was most peculiarly adapted to them. I allude to Mr. John Price, of Ryall, near Upton-upon-Severn, the great breeder of Herefordshire cattle, and whom I remember refusing 2,000 guineas, from either Lord Talbot's or Lord Plymouth's agent, for permission to pick ten of his cows—he, Mr. Price, to bar one of them ! But great as were the prices he obtained for his *neat cattle*, he would have gained six times as much by *neat horses*, had he taken them into Leicestershire and ridden them. I will say this of John Price,—and I knew him well—that, with his head and hand, Leicestershire should have been his market ; for, as it was, he sold horses for great prices ; for example, *two* to the late Lord Coventry—then Lord Deerhurst—for five hundred guineas each, one of which, by the way, no man could ride except himself. But there would have been no necessity for cautioning Mr. Price as to the sort of horse he should buy, for he was a superb judge of a hunter, and always bought not only well-bred ones, but sound ones ; added to which he could ride them brilliantly.* Barring

* Mr. Price would have his price for his horses, and now and then overstood his market, as the saying is. He had a clever little Bobadil horse for which he was offered three hundred guineas, but wanted three hundred and fifty. Throwing my leg over him one day, and giving him a gallop at his request, I said, "*this horse will be a roarer.*" "Impossible ;" said Mr. Price ; but he shortly afterwards sold him for thirty pounds. He says the best horse he ever had was a big chesnut gelding, sold by him to the late Lord Forester, and given by his lordship to Lord Jersey, who called him Cecil. He was the finest winded horse, and the best in dirt, Lord Jersey ever had. He was not thorough-bred, but had very large feet.



CAPTAIN PARKER, M.F.H., AND THE WORCESTERSHIRE HOUNDS, 1829. *From a tinted aquatint by H. PYALL, after a painting by T. WOODWARD. The print lent by Messrs. Ackermann. Woodward lived from 1801 to 1852.*

a few, and only a few, I could have given the lead to no man in a very quick thing, *over a very deep country*—for there he shone—if John Price was out, in his best day, and for ought I know to the contrary he can still “do the trick.” On more than one occasion he has been the *only* man who could live with hounds, when the scent lay well, over that distressing part of Worcestershire, about Grafton, &c., on the Warwickshire side of the county. Indeed I remember his playing a solo with them upon *Judgment*, one of the horses Lord Coventry purchased, not one other man in the field being able to go his pace through the dirt. The same county also produced that sporting yeoman Mr. Patrick, known in Warwickshire as quite “a man of business” when any thing serious was going on, and whose good little mare cut so respectable a figure in—nay, indeed, was so near winning—the great Leicestershire steeple-chase, and was purchased the same day by Lord Plymouth for two hundred guineas.

But I have not done with the Prices. I was not in the field in the days of Mr. Barry Price, when he planted every man out, at the Rosy Brook, in the Vale of White Horse, on his famous horse Monarchy, then riding good eighteen stone : but I like to record such feats to the credit of man and horse. His son, Captain Price, R.N., I have seen a good deal of, and a very thrusting rider he was. Mr. Robert Price, who resided near Ludlow, was also a very neat horseman, with a good eye to hounds, and had once the honour of riding a race against Buckle. The Captain, however, was at one time very often in the racing saddle. The last season I hunted in Staffordshire there was a very good heavy weight by the name of Purshouse, and a good sportsman as well. I remember once seeing this gentleman come up, as some of the shy ones were trying to get a stiff gate off its hinges ; “*Let a man come to it,*” said Mr. P., and, popping over it on his pigeon-eyed horse, left his friends in the lurch. Mr. Joseph Parfutt, a great Berkshire brewer, was a *most superior* horseman, with his ability lamentably thrown away in so vile a country as Sir John Cope’s. Fancy a man meeting hounds at Hartley Row turnpike ! The last year I was in Hampshire, Mr. Parfutt sold a horse for two hundred guineas—a solitary instance in that part of the world. Mr. Edmund Peel, until crippled by gout, was one of the best men, and nearly the best mounted man, in the Atherstone country, for many successive seasons. He rode with great judgment, always forward, but never to the baffling of hounds. Mr. Domville Poole was one of the best of the Cheshire men ; the Hon. Philip Pierrepont, a good heavy man in Mr. Drake’s country ; and there was a good grazier by the name of Parr, in Leicestershire, who once or twice distinguished himself—particularly in a run the “Squire” had some years back in the Quorn country, when he was one of about a dozen, out of a hundred and fifty, at the end.

Going many years back, there was a very fine horseman in Warwickshire—Mr. Walsh Porter, who so much distinguished himself on his two little bay mares, not more than fourteen hands three inches high, but lengthy and well-bred. If my memory does not fail me, he purchased one of them of Mr. Wynniatt and the other of Sir Grey Skipworth, at two hundred guineas each. But there was a peculiarity in his style of riding, at that period the more striking, inasmuch as it was very seldom displayed in the field—I mean the long stirrup leather. In this instance it had a more remarkable appearance, from the fact of the rider being six feet high, and his mare so low. One feared, indeed, as he charged the rasping fences of Warwickshire—which he did in gallant style—that his feet might strike them, by their hanging so much below the belly of his mare. Mr. Porter had likewise an excellent hand ; and, although a very good judge of horsemanship, used to say of him, that he was “*very near* being a very fine horseman,” I confess—and I saw much of his performance—I considered him perfect. There was a smoothness about his seat, and all the movements of himself and his mares, that was delightful to behold, and his example was not lost sight of in Warwickshire. He resided quite on the outside of the country ; and if a correct account could be given of the distance those two good little animals travelled in the course of an open season, I think it would scarcely be believed.

But it may be said—what credit can be given to a long legg’d gentleman on a two hundred guinea mare, if I produce another gentleman who rode nearly as hard, *with only one leg*, and on very queer cattle ? Had I words and images at command, I might awaken the sympathy of all sportsmen for the fate of a man who could follow hounds, having only one leg, a disabled shoulder, and who was obliged to let go his bridle when he leaped a fence to hold on by the saddle, being deprived of the natural clip from the thighs. But what will not a British seaman do ? and such was Captain Pell, whom I saw with the Oakley hounds when I visited Lord Lynedoch. It appeared he hunted every day on which he could reach hounds, and I saw him take many good fences. Perhaps this may be considered not a bad finish to the list of P’s, and the letter Q draws blank.

I cannot do better than begin the next batch of good horsemen with Lord Rancliffe, of Bunny Park, Notts., an excellent sportsman, residing within the limits of the Quorn country. As a rider to hounds his lordship has ever been considered quite first-rate—always trying to go, and very seldom failing in being where he wished to be alongside the pack, let the pace or country be what it might. In fact, both in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, his fame as a rider has long since been established ; and he was the only person I ever saw riding a good pie-bald hunter—one that could go the pace and hold it. Mr. Wilson Roberts, of Bewdley,

used to go very well over Leicestershire some years ago, in the late Lord Forester's time, and, like his Lordship, generally possessed some good Shropshire horses of the old Snap blood. Colonel Rolleston also went well over the same country, and particularly on his famous horse Spot. I am likewise old enough to remember seeing Mr. Rowland (in those days called Mr. Rowland the farrier, since, of course, V.S.) riding capitably when Lord Sefton had the Quorn, and as a proof of it, his Lordship gave him eight hundred guineas for a grey horse, which he called after his name. I saw Mr. Rowland a few years back at Melton, looking hearty and well, but he had given up the chase. But surely I am not going to pass over Jack Raven, Meynell's huntsman, and afterwards Lord Sefton's ! I could as soon believe I should forget my dinner. Jack's best days were passed before I knew him, but he rode well then, and looked the horseman to the very tittle. Indeed there was no deception at all about Jack Raven, for a more independent straightforward fellow never showed his face. 'Tis a thousand pities there is no print of him, for he would have furnished the very beau ideal of an English huntsman to a pack of fox-hounds. His countenance was indicative of very superior intellect—uncultivated, no doubt ; and his appearance manly in the extreme, with a voice such as I have seldom or never heard since. You would have thought it had been pitched purposely for hounds—and who can say it was not ? Jack was a jolly soul in the evening, and I fear the arm chair in the servant's hall at Quorn, and " its accompaniment, *ale*," which the poet gives to history, proved at last his bane.

Now what must I say of Captain Ross, or rather of Mr. Horatio Ross, he having long since ceased to hold her Majesty's commission ? Why, perhaps the best judgment of his horsemanship and pluck, would be formed by a recapitulation of the several feats he performed in the various sweepstakes in which he was engaged over Leicestershire ; which have, of course, been read and heard of in all parts of the world. I shall therefore only touch upon them lightly. His first match was between himself and the late Lord Kennedy, made on their road to Epsom races—his lordship backing Mr. Douglas against Mr. Ross, four miles over Leicestershire—thus ascertaining which was the best horseman of the two—the former being a crack man in the north. Mr. Ross proved the winner ; but the interest this match created is best shown, not in the money depending on it—several thousand pounds, his lordship himself having staked more than two thousand pounds upon it—but by the vast pains taken in procuring horses for the decision of it. In fact, all England was ransacked—such was the *esprit de corps* on the occasion—and twelve hundred guineas were offered and refused in one quarter, and eight hundred in another. The two contending horses cost a thousand pounds, one chosen out of the stable of Sir H. Goodricke, and the other of Mr. Assheton

Smith. Neither were the pains taken by their riders less severe. Ross reduced himself from 13st. 5lb. to 11st. 8lb., with his saddle, and Douglas from 14st. to 12st. 9lb. Much was said about another match between these gentlemen, with some insinuations of this having been no trial of horses, *as hunters*, or of hunting horsemanship, by reason of the fences having been broken down previously to the match being performed, but none other was made. Be it, however, borne in mind, that in a trial of Clinker over the ground, to ascertain his fitness for the undertaking, and previously to the fences being lowered,—the ground very deep withal—he went the four miles in eleven minutes and fifteen seconds, ridden by Dick Christian—13st. 4lb. !!

Mr. Ross's next display of horsemanship was in a match, two miles over a very strong part of Leicestershire, against Mr. Gilmour, who, as I have before said, had a fine stud at Melton. The conditions were, that Ross should have one hundred yards start, and if Gilmour touched him or his horse before they reached the winning-post, half the match money was won by him—the other half depending on the final issue. Ross's horse refused a fence about midway ; so, by being touched by his competitor, he paid upon that event, but received on the other by coming in first. This produced the great Leicestershire steeple-chase, on which I need not dwell, further than to say that, until the accident of losing his stirrup, no man could have gone straighter or more gallantly than Mr. Ross did, although it was announced by him at starting that he only intended to cut out the work for Clinker.

We next find Mr. Ross matched against Mr. Osbaldeston, who, unwilling that Clinker should retain the laurels he had gained (for, barring the unlucky slip at the last, he had undoubtedly been the winner of the *great* steeple-chase), challenged him to bring him to the post, and ride him against himself upon Clasher, one of his favourite hunters. The challenge was accepted, but the match was postponed in consequence of an accident to Clasher, and the Squire paid forfeit. Like two good-plucked ones, however, they substituted other horses rather than disappoint the spectators, and a noble struggle ensued. Desperate falls were encountered,—the Squire had one, and Ross two—the first, by charging an impracticable place which the Squire left on his right ; the second in a *second ditch*, of a double fence, in which his mare was cast on her back, and was not released under an hour. It was, however, admitted by all present, that more gallant horsemanship could not have been displayed than that of both riders ; and had it not been for the second fall, it would have been a fine race to the last, as Ross was creeping up.

Now all who know the "Squire" would be sure the matter would not rest here. Clinker was yet supposed to be the best horse in Leicestershire, but he

disputed the point. Clasher was again brought to the post with his owner on him, and Clinker with Dick Christian, each riding 12st. It was a *splendid* race, the five miles being run in sixteen minutes—but Clinker fell at the last fence and was beaten. But what will satisfy a man whose soul burns "*famæ venientis amore*," as Virgil says of Æneas? Mr. Ross was to be defeated as well as Clinker, and another match between these two sporting characters soon after took place—Ross, 13st. 7lb., on Polecat; Osbaldeston, 12st., on Pilot—distance four miles, the latter staking 500 sovs. to 200 sovs. Pilot won with much ease; Polecat having refused a brook in Harrington lordship, which left her not a chance to win, as the pace was good, the four miles being run in fourteen minutes! Eight hundred persons were present at this match; but the happiest man in the throng was the Squire.

As descriptions of all scenes are but the feelings of the narrator, it may be excusable in me to dwell a little longer on these. May I then be allowed to give the history of the horse who was in great part the cause of this strife for fame? Clinker was purchased by Sir H. Goodricke, from Mr. Joseph Leeds, for five hundred guineas, and was considered one of the best, if not the best, of all the horses at Melton, in a very severe forty minutes' burst. His dam produced three hunters which sold for the enormous sum of two thousand pounds—save five; and had he accepted the offer of twelve hundred guineas for Clinker, the sum total would have been without a parallel in hunting studs. As regards his owner, in the contests in which he engaged him, it is but justice to say, he backed him with spirit and was well supported by his numerous friends. Mr. Ross has, however, retired from the field in which he acquired his fame, and now contents himself with a pack of harriers and his gun; but neither his fame nor name will be forgotten in Leicestershire for many generations to come. I will not say there are not better horsemen, but a more fearless one was never seen by the cover's side.

I need say but little of Mr. Rawlinson—Mr. Lindow's brother—his good name as a rider being in every one's mouth. He has retired from the field before his time in consequence of indifferent health, but when he was "going" in the Duke of Beaufort's or the Warwickshire hunts, no man could beat him in a quick thing; and once or twice—on his grey mare, for instance—he ran clean away from the field, as Lindow did on The Clipper. For perfection of seat and excellence of hand he is quite equal to his twin brother, and if you had seen the one you had seen the other. The following trait, however, is not unworthy of notice: Although nothing can exceed the brotherly affection which has always subsisted between Rawlinson and Lindow—indeed, if the string that united them were still uncut it could not be closer—yet when they met in the field, in their hard-riding days,

they appeared as though they could break each other's necks. Each was jealous of his brother's fame, and it was amusing to see how they strove for the mastership.

There was a *very heavy* man in Warwickshire some years since who rode well to hounds, and as such I shall not omit him. I think he could not be under twenty stone. I allude to Mr. Henry Roberts, who resided at Stratford-on-Avon, and was for many years a constant attendant on the Warwickshire hounds. I saw a very excellent rider in Dorsetshire, Mr. Richards, of Marstock; and I was much pleased with the horsemanship of Mr. Ridsdale, whom I saw in the North. He rode all thorough-bred ones, and of the very best stamp.

I have now to conclude the list of R's with three excellent horsemen, as well as three excellent servants. I shall begin with Roffey, late huntsman to Colonel Jolliffe, who, taking his weight into account,—at least fifteen stone—was as good a man to get over a rough country as any one would wish to see. In making his way through a cover he was equal to Dick Foster, and that is saying enough. Jack Richards, huntsman to the Badsworth, was what we call “a devil to ride” when he whipped-in to Sir Bellingham Graham in the Atherstone country, and I heard a good account of him when I was with him one day with the Badsworth, but I had no chance to judge for myself, as we could not get a run. Ransom, second horseman to Lord Jersey, and who was with his lordship in that capacity many years, was a most superior horseman. Indeed it is enough to say that he rode Lord Jersey's horses, for woe to the man who pulled and hauled them about. But surely I am not going to omit Tom Rose, so many years huntsman to the Duke of Grafton's hounds! Indeed I think I see him this moment, in his green coat and his black cap, fringed round with his white locks—a most respectable and sportsmanlike old gentleman, civil and good humoured to every one, which is more than was said of his son, who was one of the new sort, whereas Tom was one of the old sort—of servants. Touching his horsemanship, as practice makes perfect, he had every opportunity of becoming a good one, although with some I could name, all advantages have been lost. Tom Rose, however, was always—aye, even to the last, and he hunted the hounds almost up to his seventieth year—a good man across his country, which, from having ridden over it so long, he knew as well as he knew his road to his bed. This, let me observe, is no slight advantage in a strongly fenced country like his. A weak place in a live hedge this year, cannot be a very strong one next; and the knowledge of such places, on first getting out of, and away from covers, lands a man comfortably with his hounds. Of course I need not tell a sportsman—that after two or three deep rings in Frisley Wood, in black mud half knee-deep, Tom Rose's horse was entitled to every chance he could give him; and Tom seldom failed in bestowing it upon him. In short,

he was a clever and judicious horseman, and having said this I have said enough. Tom Penn, Sir Watkin's pad groom, was a good horseman, although he did break his neck in a clumsy way at last.

I have a long list in letter S, and, of course, lots of *Smith's*. But Theodore Hook says, "they should be numbered," and there can be no hesitation as to the best claim to "number *one*," namely, Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq., of Tedworth House, Hants, M.P. for Carnarvonshire, late owner of, and huntsman to, the Quorn hounds, and at present hunting a very good pack of his own in Hampshire. Now I am not going to give merely my own opinion of Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith, as a horseman and a rider to hounds, but shall lay before my readers that of all the sporting world, at least of all who have seen him in the field ; which is, that, taking him from the first day's hunting of the season to the last ! place him on the best horse in his stable, or on the worst, he is sure to be with his hounds, *and close to them too*. In fact, he has undoubtedly proved himself the best and hardest rider England ever saw, and it would be vain in any man to dispute his title to that character. But we might as well attempt to make a blind man an optician, a lame man a dancing master, or a one-armed one a fiddler, as to suppose that any gentleman could arrive at this ultra state of perfection *in a very difficult art*, which horsemanship undoubtedly is, unless nature had been prodigal of the requisites. Setting aside the daring, the undaunted, the not-to-be-denied determination of Mr. Smith to get to hounds, despite of any and all difficulties which may have opposed him—the result of strongly-braced nerves, and great physical powers—let us look at him in his saddle. Does he not look like a workman ? Observe how lightly he sits ! No one would suppose him to be a twelve stone man. And what a firm hand he has on his horses ! How well he puts them at their fences, and what chances he gives them to extricate themselves from any scrape they may have gotten into ! He never hurries them, *then* : no man ever saw Tom Smith ride fast at his fences, at least at large ones (brooks excepted), let the pace be what it may ; and what a treat it is to see him jump water ! His falls, to be sure have been innumerable ; but what *very hard* riding man does not get falls ? Hundreds of Mr. Smith's falls may be accounted for ; he has measured his horses' pluck by his own, and ridden at hundreds of non-feasible places, with the chance of getting over them, *somehow*. Bravo ! Mr. Smith ; you must be number *one*,* for, by Heavens, there will never be such another Mr. Smith as long as the world stands.

* It used to be asserted, but I presume with exaggeration, that Mr. Smith's falls were about a hundred in the season. Strange, however, as it may appear, this gallant horseman was never very seriously injured by falls—no broken bones that I can remember hearing of (the worst he had was with the Duke of Rutland's hounds, when his head was much hurt), but he is made of hard stuff, and his activity has assisted him in getting away from his horse. Coolness in danger—habitual to him, as

I have said that Mr. Smith's make and shape, together with a fine bridle-hand, have assisted him in rising to perfection as a horseman, and I will produce one or two proofs of the use he made of these by no means subaltern endowments. I have seen him riding horses which scarcely required a bridle, such as his large grey horse Jack-o'-Lantern, Gift, Tom Thumb, Gaddesby, and others equally temperate and agreeable; and I have seen, and heard of, him riding some that no other men could have ridden, *as he rode them*. Mr. Lindow's Clipper was, for example, so hard a puller with hounds, that the bit called "the Clipper bit," was made purposely to suit him, and a most severe one it is. On a proposal being one day made, that Lindow and Smith should exchange horses for the day, the latter, previously to mounting the Clipper, put his curb chain into his pocket. "Good bye to you," said his friends, as the hounds were finding their fox, "we shall never see you again." He rode him, however, in his usual place—alongside the pack! It is well known that Radical was purchased out of Mr. Smith's stable for £500, to run the steeple-chase against Clinker. He was a hard-pulling, thorough-bred horse, that would go in nothing but a snaffle bridle, and for the first two seasons of his owner's riding him, was awkwardness and wilfulness personified. In fact, the character Smith gave of him when he sold him was this—"Whoever rides Radical," said he, "should be as quiet as a mouse, as bold as a lion, and as strong as a horse." Nevertheless, Mr. Smith rode him with his hounds, in a plain snaffle bridle, turning and twisting him as occasion might require.

Mr. Smith became a master of hounds in 1810, succeeding the late Lord Foley in the Quorn country, in which he had hunted for at least half a score of years, when Lords Sefton and Foley occupied it, and I believe I may go further back and class him amongst the field in the latter end of Mr. Meynell's reign, as we find mention made of him in Mr. Lowth's poem of the Billesden Coplow run, which was in Mr. Meynell's time. Thus may he be considered to have been duly qualified for the task he entered upon, and he hunted the Quorn country seven seasons.

It is only natural to suppose, from Mr. Smith's high reputation as a rider, and as what we may here call an amateur sportsman, that much was expected from him when he came forth as a practical one, in the trying situation of master of the Quorn hounds. Neither were these anticipations disappointed. Melton and its neighbourhood were never more full of *sportsmen* than during Mr. Smith's mastership, indeed to all hard riders—has likewise been a preservative for him. But to show how little he valued falls when he hunted Leicestershire, I shall relate the following anecdote. "I never see you in the Harborough country," said he to a gentleman who occasionally hunted with the Quorn. "I don't much like your Harborough country," replied the gentleman, "the fences are so large." "Oh," observed Mr. Smith, "there is no place you cannot get over *with a fall*."

and the whole business of the field was conducted in a truly sportsman-like style. Those eminent men in their line—Jack Shirley, Dick Burton, Joe Harrison, and Tom Wingfield, were in their turns assistants to Mr. Smith in the field ; and these having been the best days of himself, Mr. Lindow, Mr. White, Mr. Maxse, Mr. Maher, Mr. Edge, Sir James Musgrave, Mr. William Coke, and a few others of this stamp in their saddles, the riding to the hounds of this period was above all praise, and what no other country under the sun could find a parallel to. As for Mr. Smith himself, so often at work whilst the others were standing still, the wonder is that he has an unfractured bone in his body, whereas I have reason to believe that he was very seldom much hurt. But no man knows so well as he himself does *how to fall*, which accounts for the trifling injuries he has sustained ; and I once saw an instance of his skill in this act of self-preservation. He stuck fast in a bullfinch, on his tall grey horse, his hinder legs being entangled in the growers, and there was every appearance of the horse falling on his head into a deep ditch below him. A less cool man than Mr. Smith might have thrown himself from his saddle, in which case, had the growers given way at the moment, for the horse appeared suspended by them, his horse might have fallen upon him, ere he could have gotten out of his way. Mr. Smith, however, sat quiet, and by that means the well-practised animal got his legs free, and he landed himself in the field without further difficulty. At one time it appeared to me as if nothing could prevent both falling headlong into the ditch. Then what a capital hand over the country was Jack Shirley in those days, and what a capital anecdote did Mr. John Moore tell me of him from his own experience ! He was riding one Gadsby—a celebrated hunter of his master's, but then a good deal the worse for wear—over one of the worst fields in all Leicestershire for a blown horse, between Tilton and Somerby, abounding with large ant-hills, and deep holding furrows. “The old horse,” said my informant, “was going along at a slapping pace, with his head quite loose, and down hill at the time, whilst Jack was in the act of putting a point of whipcord to his thong, *having a large open clasp knife between his teeth at the time !*”

To return to Mr. Smith as master of the Quorn hounds. Mr. Smith's father—himself a good sportsman, and much in the confidence of Mr. Meynell—being at the time alive, he may be said to have been, as to pecuniary resources, far less able than any of his predecessors to hunt the Quorn country ; and although he had a subscription exceeding £2,000 per annum towards his expenses, there can be little doubt but that it was as much as he could do to make matters square at the year's end. There was then in his hunting establishment nothing of the pomp and parade which had characterized the doings of some of his predecessors—not,

by the bye, at all essential to the well-doing of hounds—but every thing with him bore the stamp of really business-like proceedings. In the kennel also there was to a certain extent a disregard of some of those niceties, if I may so express myself, which some masters insist upon, as much perhaps to gratify the eye, as tending to mere utility. Mr. Smith was not particular as to the sizeableness of his hounds, his object being their running well together, and other not-to-be-dispensed-with essentials. I believe few people had a more killing pack than his were in the three last years of his hunting Leicestershire ; and his run, called “ The Belvoir Day,” in his last year, was, as I am informed, unequalled for severity of pace, and stoutness in the continuance of it, in the voluminous annals of Leicestershire fox-hunting. The distance, from point to point, was nineteen miles ; and so severe was the country, and so quick the pace, that himself and Mr. White were, at last, the only two who could live any where near to the hounds.

As a huntsman, I fearlessly put Mr. Smith in the first class. He has, *even to this day*, all the requisites to make him such—zeal, quickness of perception, untiring perseverance, a ready judgment when in difficulty, and horsemanship quite unequalled for daring and duration by any man of this or any other age. For example, what said his brother sportsmen of him only last season, in Lincolnshire ? Why, that there was no man who could get over, or out of, when in, the wide and deep drains of that country so cleverly as Tom Smith did. When too wide to be cleared, as I was informed by an eye-witness, he would force his horse into them diagonally, then, alighting from his saddle, and scrambling up the bank, he would pull his horse after him. And this when past his grand climacteric !

During the period of Mr. Smith’s hunting Leicestershire, his residence was at Quorn Hall, the residence of his predecessors, and, at one time, that equally celebrated sportsman, Mr. Edge, of Strelley Hall, near Nottingham, resided with him. His three famous hunters, Remus, Banker, and Guzman, were then in their prime ; no man could beat him, on either of them, in a burst, although they carried twenty stone. The excellence of Guzman may be estimated by the fact of his having carried his owner every Monday for nine seasons in succession : that of Banker, by the equally extraordinary fact of Mr. Edge having been offered fifty pounds for one day’s hunting on him ; and of Remus and Banker conjointly, by the offer for them—which was refused—of two thousand two hundred guineas, by the late Lord Middleton !

I had the good luck to see one extraordinary run with Mr. Smith, rendered the more so by the period of the season at which it happened—being on the sixteenth day of April, under a hot sun, but after a wet night. We found in a hedge row,

in coming away from the gorse at Slauson, which had proved blank ; ran very fast to within a mile of Shankton Holt—say a quarter of an hour, and killed. Found instantly in the Holt, and killed near to Market Harborough town—an hour all but two minutes. There was great distress among the horses, only one single check having occurred, and amongst others old Jack-o'-Lantern stopped with Mr. Smith, although he came about again, and went to the end. I say "old" Jack-o'-Lantern, because Mr. Smith had afterwards young Jack-o'-Lantern, which he considered a still better hunter than his sire.

Although there are, and have been, more extensive breeders of hounds than Mr. Smith, his blood is to be found in several of our best kennels, and he has been a spirited purchaser. For example, he gave Sir Richard Sutton a thousand guineas for one pack, with which I hunted on the first day of their appearance, in his Hampshire country, in 1827, and this was previously to his father's decease. He also offered Mr. Warde 1500 guineas for ten couples. The last time I saw his hounds in Hampshire, was on the 8th of April, 1829, at Speary Well, near Lyndhurst, whilst he was on a visit to Sir Hussey Vivian, in the New Forest. He had then a fine pack of hounds, but was without a single whipper-in, excepting a little boy, a son of Mr. Warde's late huntsman Neverd, who being mounted on Rob Roy, a horse of great size, was compared by the field to a frog on a washing-block. Burton entered his service before the next season, but the one he concluded, on the day I am now speaking of, had been anything but a good one. The last time I saw his hounds in Leicestershire, was the season but one before the last, when Lord Lonsdale gave him a day in the Tilton country, but it was a *dies non*, there not being an atom of scent. He had a noble pack in the field, picked for the occasion, no doubt.

Mr. Smith's present kennel at Tedworth House, Hants, having been so accurately described by Mr. Delmé Radcliffe in his "Noble Science," it only requires to be mentioned here as regards one circumstance, and this is a very material one,—namely with relation to what, in kennel language is called its soundness. Notwithstanding all that was done to render it in all other respects, complete, it did not prove to be what is called a sound one—in other words the disorder called kennel lameness prevailed in it to such an extent, that Mr. Smith told me he was absolutely obliged to put some of his hounds under the cow and calf houses to prevent their becoming useless. Further—that he had tried various artificial subsoils, such as chalk, large stones, &c., but it was his fixed opinion, that nothing but clay, well puddled, for the foundation, and consequently impervious to damp, would have the desired effect.

I shall now dismiss Mr. Smith, but not without making him signal, otherwise

than as merely a master of the Quorn hounds, as also of those he now possesses, and as a horseman quite unequalled in the present or in any other age. I allude to the extraordinary compliment paid to himself, and to fox-hunting as well, in the reception he met with last year, when he brought his hounds into Leicestershire. But to thoroughly explain myself here I must break fresh ground—ground on which I scarcely have courage to tread. Was the compliment paid entirely to Mr. Smith, or in part, to the noble diversion of fox-hunting? I answer to Mr. Smith entirely; why, therefore, it may be said, is this question asked? I will explain myself further.

That Mr. Smith hunted Leicestershire as Leicestershire ought to be hunted, is a fact no one will dispute; but that Mr. Smith was *generally* popular in Leicestershire, or in the hunting world throughout, few will venture to assert. It might be, as is too often the case with men pre-eminent in their station, that his pre-eminence was to a certain extent the cause of his not being so generally popular in the field as other masters of the country had been before him, and have been since. A hastiness of manner, a few sharp rebukes—little as they may be regarded by his equals, or even by *real* sportsmen of any station conscious of their having deserved them—are not generally relished, and to administer these was Mr. Smith given in his zeal to do his duty by the country he had taken upon himself to hunt. But mark the result! No doubt, when he left the country, some of those wounds *which words will give*—and which are said to be sometimes harder to heal than those given by the sword—were still open, and yet what a balm to every thing did his presence produce! From far and near did his brother sportsmen assemble, and, excuse me, reader, if I express a doubt, whether the great captain of the age, on his arrival from the wars, with victory on his brow, could have had more honour done him than had this master of fox-hounds on the occasion alluded to. The scene of congratulation did not lie in Hyde Park nor at Charing Cross, nor in any other public place; but in the middle of a large field in a midland county, to which repaired scores of persons from upwards of a hundred miles distant, in addition to hundreds who came from places adjacent, and for what purpose? To see the hero of a hundred fights? To see a monarch crowned? No; but to see and welcome a comparatively humble individual, the man who has made himself signal as (take him for all in all) the first fox-hunter and sportsman of the age in which he lives! Thus then is it that I have been bold enough to assert that fox-hunting, together with Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith, claims some share in this triumph—for a triumph it was. In no other pursuit would pre-eminence have been so attractive.

But let me not be supposed capable of detracting one atom from the character

of Mr. Smith, otherwise than as a sportsman. I believe him to be in all the relations of social life, every thing that an English gentleman ought to be, and such is he found to be, by those who know him well. That he is not the best tempered man in the world, he himself once told his Leicestershire field, perhaps with good effect, as giving force to the cry of "Hold hard !" and his "Hi ! hi !" to any one who rode over his hounds, will never be forgotten in Leicestershire. But on this subject, some amusing anecdotes are on record. His father was wont to say that he himself was the worst tempered man in England, *except his son Tom !* Again—on a Leicestershire grazier, who used to hunt with him in the Quorn country, hearing him check some of the field on the memorable Rolleston day (the day on which he was so handsomely greeted on his arrival amongst his old hunting friends) he exclaimed to Mr. White "there is the old *Hi hi !* Sir, but *not with the usual emphasis.*" By this we may presume, he was, on this occasion, on his very best behaviour. But we will dwell no longer on this subject ; there are spots on the sun with all its brightness, and we will not seek, with microscopic eyes, to tarnish the fame of the first man of the age—in his line assuredly.

The late Mr. Assheton Smith had retired from the hunting field before I entered it ; but when I saw him at Amesbury Coursing Meeting, on his fine black horse, I could distinguish the remains of those powers of horsemanship which placed him so forward in the days of Meynell, and also in great measure accounted for the prowess of his son, the resemblance between them, making allowance for age, being peculiarly striking.

As milder lights are overpowered by the blaze and lustre of those that are stronger, so must the horseman who is brought to notice immediately succeeding Mr. Assheton Smith, appear to no small disadvantage. Mr. Smith, of the Craven hounds, however, must be "number two ;" and having seen a good deal of him in the field, and heard more, I hesitate not in calling him a very wonderful performer over a rough country ; and although not what I call an elegant horseman—his seat being looser than I like to see it—no one can dispute his being a good one. Indeed every body allows that, on a middling nag—and his have not been "from great Alceste's royal stalls supplied"—he has few equals. He has not had, like his namesake, the means and opportunities of picking the best. However, I will go so far as to assert that, if I were asked for a subject to enable an artist to represent upon canvas the often talked-of phenomenon of "a rum one to look at, but a devil to go," I should say, "Take Tom Smith's hog-maned black mare, with himself upon her," that is to say, if the said black mare be still in the land of the living. Believe me, reader, I mean no disparagement. On the contrary, as the bad carpenter never has good tools, so those of the more skilful one generally perform

their office. I repeat, then, that Mr. Smith, of the Craven, is—all things considered—a surprising man across a country.

I have a more difficult task now to perform in drawing the character of this extraordinary huntsman, for extraordinary he certainly is, and in some respects unequalled by any man who has come under my observation in the character of a Master of Hounds ; hunting them himself. And, in what consists this striking peculiarity ? I answer—first, in an enthusiastic zeal for, and an unsubdued spirit in the pursuit of fox-hunting, which have carried him on in an almost uninterrupted prosperous course, from the period when, as a schoolboy, he followed the hounds on his pony, to that which found him hunting the second best country in England. Secondly, there are features in Mr. Smith's character as a huntsman, that appear to be peculiarly his own, and for which I have reason to believe the hunting world give him full credit. The sort of intuitive knowledge he displays in regard to what is called "the run of a hunted fox," may be said to border on instinct. At all events, it is such as I have never seen or heard of in any other huntsman ; and when we read, in the preface to his book, of his having killed ninety foxes in ninety-one days in the Craven country, we might almost say one half of them were killed by his hounds and the other half by *himself*. Then what is my opinion of Mr. Smith as a huntsman ? It is told in a few words. He has proved that he can kill foxes with any man in England, and his having killed so many good old ones in his Hambledon country, and still more of all sorts in the Craven country, notoriously a bad scenting one, makes good the proverb that "handsome is that handsome does." Still I am compelled to say, I am not a general admirer of Mr. Smith's system of hunting hounds—the system at least which he pursued when I saw him in the two countries above mentioned. There was too much wildness in his proceedings—too much of the *man*, if I may be allowed the expression, and not enough of the hounds, to satisfy a lover of hunting. I admit that there was something enthusiastically cheering in seeing him dash through a strong cover, come out of it with the leading hound, and with hat in hand, and cheering holloa, ride away with the few couples that came next, apparently thinking nothing of those left behind. But where was his eye at this time ?—on his hounds ? often not, but *forward* to some point which his intuitive knowledge of the line foxes take induced him to believe his had taken ; and six times in ten he was right. But the question is,—is this the way a pack of hounds should get away from a cover with their fox ? In my humble opinion it is not. It is not doing the thing altogether in a workmanlike style, or in that in which fox-hunting should always be done. To carry on a scent, *with safety*, the body of the pack should do the work, and this never can be the case when a few couples get away ahead, and the rest

become blown by getting up to them. Neither is this system altogether favourable to sport. Foxes holloed away and ridden after in this manner are very apt to run short, either from fear or want of wind, a fact proved by the experience of woodland foxes generally standing *longer before* hounds than those found in gorse covers, because they most commonly have a chance to go *quietly* away. What is called bursting a fox and hunting him to death, are very distinct operations ; and on this subject I can state an incident to the point which I witnessed with Lord Kintore's hounds, in Scotland. We had run a fox about twenty minutes into a small cover, whence we viewed him breaking away again. "Pray help Joe to stop the hounds," said Lord Kintore to me, blowing his horn at the time ; "*let him get well away and we shall have a run !*" He did get well away, with the body of the pack on his line ; and the result was a beautiful forty minutes, and his brush is now in my view. I call this fox-hunting.

Let me not be supposed to have the least intention of detracting from the merits of Mr. Smith, as a sportsman and a huntsman. The man who can kill ninety foxes in as many days, and in what Mr. Warde pronounced to be the worst scenting country he ever had to do with, must be allowed to be both one and the other. He had his system, and he found it answer ; my only object in alluding to it is the desire that it may not become a precedent for those who come after him, and who may in vain expect, by similar means, the like success.

The Hambledon is certainly the best of all the Hampshire countries for hounds, unless it be the New Forest, and I saw a splendid run over it in Mr. Smith's time, of seventeen miles from point to point, without entering one cover, and the first fourteen without a cast : and in the same season he had one of the most remarkable runs that the annals of fox-hunting record, the description of it, by Mr. Smith, reminding one of the fox-hunting of olden times. The fact was, his foxes in those days took a deal of killing, and for this reason : previously to his taking to the country, they had not been "killed down," as we term it, and the consequence was, a large portion of good old foxes, able to stand before hounds.

I rejoice to hear that Mr. Smith had his share of sport in Northamptonshire, and that the gentlemen of the country and others were satisfied with him. I always admired Mr. Smith's conduct towards his field—firm, without being offensive.

I believe the Hambledon country is now hunted by Mr. Long, jun., of Preshaw House, whose huntsman is Squires, late huntsman to Mr. King, who succeeded Mr. Smith ; and the mention of Mr. Long induces me to relate an anecdote of him, at a period at which, perhaps neither he nor myself imagined he would ever be the master of the Hambledon hounds. That fine horseman, Colonel Greenwood,

was in the field, and being then a captain in a Hussar regiment, had moustache on his upper lip. "Who is that gentleman," said *Master Long*,—for he was then only in his ninth year, "*with a wig under his nose?*" I have heard that Mr. Long takes bitches only into the field. His kennels are at Preshaw.

I cannot dismiss my notice of Mr. Smith, as a master of hounds, without offering a few remarks touching his book. I was disappointed in finding it so short. The announcement of the "*Diary of a Huntsman*"—and of a huntsman of such long experience as Mr. Smith—led me to believe I should get at least twice the information from it than is contained in two hundred and twenty pages of large type and larger margin. I looked for the experience of some particular days, in which some particular events had occurred, some particular difficulties been overcome; in fact, some new lights, and those by which future masters and huntsmen, as well as others, might more clearly see their way in the dark and intricate path they take upon themselves to pursue, in the difficult science of hunting the fox.

I think my friend—and in strict friendship I write this—is rather hypothetical on the cunning and *acquirements* of foxes, the latter the result of experience of good and bad scenting days, &c., so, in my opinion, he also is on scent. Hypotheses are inseparable from the discussion of so unfathomable a subject as that of scent; but to use the language of the fox-hunter, rather than the philosopher, the closer they hold on to the line, the better and more satisfactory they are.

Mr. Smith's chapter on hounds is the best in his book. It abounds in sensible, well-considered observations, which may be most useful to the rising generation, should fox-hunting last their time, of which at present there must be doubts in all reflecting minds. At all events, it is about to receive a "severe blow and great discouragement," in the combined effects of railroads, stag-hunting, and that abominably cruel and cocktail practice of steeple-chasing. I am glad to find Mr. Smith's opinion of the size of hounds for all countries, agrees with that long since made known by me which is in favour of those of a large size, especially for severe countries. As a good big horse is always preferable to a good little one, so must it be the case with hounds; and Mr. Warde, Mr. Villebois, the Duke of Cleveland, and Lord Lonsdale have shown us that it is possible to breed them both large and good. Twenty-four inches for dog hounds against any other standard, say I.

I wish to offer one remark here with reference to the just observation of Mr. Smith, when writing on the form of hounds, namely, that the portraits by Sartorius and Stubbs, of some of the hounds of former days, which performed such wonders in trials of pace, &c., over Newmarket Heath, represented them with crooked legs, flat-sided, and loose in their loins. I think such could not have been the case with the hounds in question; but I am inclined to believe the defects were in the artists.

No one could make me believe that the portraits of the celebrated horses of his day, by Stubbs, were in the form he has given them on canvas.

The chapter by Mr. Smith, on earth-stopping, treats of a manner of performing this most essential operation, not generally known, and still less generally practised. If not carried on too far in the season, it has much to recommend it, in theory ; and as I am all for results in matters of this nature, the experience of its good effects by Mr. Smith, in the Craven country particularly, at once proves its usefulness in practice. Open earths are the great curse of fox-hunting, and in no country in which I have ever hunted, has the evil been effectually done away with by merely trusting to occasional stopping. Should Mr. Smith's plan of stopping *at once for the season*, or at least up to a certain period of it, not prove injurious to the breeding of foxes, it ought to become general.

That fine old sportsman, Mr. Loraine Smith, of Enderby Hall, Leicestershire, comes next, one of the great personal friends of Mr. Meynell, long renowned as a sportsman, and an uncommonly good judge of a hunter. Loraine Smith was considered, not so much a dashing, as a judicious rider to hounds—one who looked around him with a keen eye, ready to take every advantage of circumstances, and all this told well with him ; for, when in the prime of life, he must have been a great weight on his horse. He was past his prime, when I knew him, but I always admired his style of riding, and owe much to him for some judicious remarks I have heard him make in chase. In short, he is a fine—an accomplished sportsman, and if he had not been such, he could never—even with his commanding pencil—have given the sporting world such a treat as “ Dick Knight, upon Contract,” in the run with the Pytchley hounds.

In my early days, Shropshire, *i.e.* the Shiffnal country, produced two capital sportsmen of the name of Smith, one known as Parson Smith, of Badger, and the other as *little* Parson Smith, and two worthier characters never breathed. The latter is dead, but although an excellent horseman, he fell short of his brother chip as a sportsman, who, I believe, was allowed to be paramount even in that sporting country. He of Badger (by Jove ! I had nearly written “ the badger-pied parson,” so aptly do these technicals present themselves to me) had generally two or three pupils under his roof, who, of course, took a leaf out of their preceptor's book, and sacrificed to Diana Venatrix, as well as to her brother Apollo ; for several good sportsmen, and amongst them one of the best men * over Warwickshire, were “ turned out,” as the term is, by this modern *Chiron*. And why should it not be so ? Look into the first chapter of Xenophon's *κυνηγετικός* and there you'll see a long list of the chief heroes of antiquity, who studied hunting under that,

* Mr. Hugh Campbell.

almost omniscient, pedagogue (Chiron), all of whom, Xenophon says, were honoured by the gods—"απὸ θεῶν ἐτιμήθη.""

But I have not yet done with the Smiths. The best mounted man, and the man who rode nearest to hounds in my part of Hampshire, during the last five years of my residing in it, was Mr. Smith (formerly a member of the old Berkeley hunt) who resided at Kempshot Park, once the residence of George IV. I saw two yeomen of this name in Yorkshire, confederates in a pack of harriers at Boroughbridge, who were much spoken of—particularly the one who hunts the hounds—as quite superior horsemen, and as such they appeared to me, having very good hands. There was also a good grazier in Leicestershire, a Smith, whom I remember distinguishing himself one day with the Quorn, in the Squire's time, and no doubt Messrs. Maxse, Maher, and a few more remember it likewise.



CHAPTER XI



UNDER the letter S some conspicuous men were to be met with in Yorkshire and Durham. I saw Mr. Sargenson, or Mr. Serjeantson, for I forgot how he spelt his name, going very well with the Duke of Cleveland—indeed I believe he was one of the best in his Grace's hunt. Mr. George Swann, of York, was a crack man with the York and Ainsty. Sir Tatton Sykes, whom I of course saw, was a race rider, and as such I do not touch on his merits here, having given him his due before ; but of the Messrs. Shafto I have something to say. Mr. Thomas Shafto, the original owner of, and, at the expense of many falls, the maker of Mr. Lindow's Clipper, was so well known to every one that it is scarcely necessary to say much about him. He was a fine horseman over a country or over a course ; but I thought he was likely to be eclipsed by his nephew, Mr. John Shafto, second son of Mr. Shafto, of Whitworth, who appeared, in my eyes, one of the most accomplished riders of his years I had ever before seen. He had the hand and seat of a John White, and the head and judgment of a man who had been twenty years with hounds. At the period I am speaking of he was at Oxford, but I hear that his maturer performances have been fully equal to his early promise.

I must now hark back to some of my older acquaintance, or they perchance may think I have forgotten them. Sir Grey Skipwith went well for at least five and twenty years over Warwickshire, which county he afterwards represented in Parliament. The worthy baronet came under the denomination of a very pretty rider—always well mounted, generally in a good place, and an attentive observer of hounds. Perhaps I may be excused a short digression, if, for the honour of Warwickshire, I mention a run I once enjoyed in his company, from a fixture which is generally called a bad one. We have twelve miles over grass, *with only one*

ploughed field, which Sir Grey said, for the honour of Warwickshire, he would not go into.* Mr. Sheldon, of Brails—son of the late Ralph Sheldon, of Weston, that perfect sample of the old English gentleman—was also one of the best of “the Warwickshire lads,” and a good sportsman withal. Lord Granville Somerset rides hard and well—the best of the family in a quick thing. But then you may say—look at his weight and the cattle he rides ! But the most scientific horseman of all the Somersets was the late Lord Charles, who could ride a race well, and was thought much of at Bibury. He was fastidiously neat in all his horse appointments, and I fancy I see him now, as I used to see him in Leicestershire, with the fore legs of his horse, from the knees to the fetlocks, in laced boots, to protect them against thorns, and with the surcingle over his saddle, in the racing style. Lord Charles was not esteemed a quick man over a country, but a good sportsman, and one that could give a correct account of a run. In judgment of horses, of all descriptions, he was supreme.

Let me take another cast into Leicestershire, as the most likely “find” of what I am in pursuit of—but mind, I only speak now of those riders I have myself seen. Amongst the best of them was Mr. Charles Standish, who, I am sorry to say, preferred the pleasures of the Continent to those of the chase, of which he was at one time both a lover and an ornament. The song says—

“Coke, on the pony, has scarce got a crony,
And Standish has distanc'd the crowd very far ;
 Whilst at a place, sir, that few men would face, sir,
 Without checking pace, sir, goes Valentine Maher ;”

and after seeing him so well placed, one laments that he should have retired from the field so early in life, and with ample means to have continued in it. Captain Stewart, commonly called “Billy Stewart”—brother to Sir Simeon, but alas no more !—used to ride very hard and well. The last time I saw him at Melton his arm was broken in two places by having been ridden over by two or three at once, when on the ground. The late Colonel Standen, of the guards, was well known, and a much harder rider could not well be. He was also a very strong and good horseman, and always up to a lark in the saddle. Like the young Lochinvar,

“He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
 He swam the Eske river, where ford there was none ;”

and when quartered in Dublin, he surprised the natives by swimming the Liffey, the Thames of Ireland, after hounds. Of Count Sandor, the Hungarian nobleman who spent the season of 1828 at Melton, I need not say much, as his doings have

* From Farnborough to Ufton Wood. Several persons staying at head quarters declined going out because it was a bad fixture !

been given on the canvas as well as in the types. The Count, however, gave astounding proof of what can be done in a short time in acquiring perfection in bodily arts, when heart and soul are earnestly engaged in them. From a mere tyro, scarcely equal to sit a horse if he shyed, he became in a few months able to go along-side the best men of the day, although at the cost of sundry marvellous escapes from broken bones and watery graves. The prints published by Ackermann, from the pictures Ferneley, of Melton, painted for the Count, descriptive of the various situations, good and bad, in which he exhibited himself in chase, are excellent, and I am not surprised to hear that they have been so eagerly sought after.

I have always been a bad hand at what is called sight-seeing. In fact I never saw a procession, save that of the mail coaches, in my life, nor any grand spectacle that I can recollect, having been always content with hearing such things described by others who have seen them. Perhaps it may be that, as the poet says—

“Thus are my eyes still captive to *one* sight,
Thus all my thoughts are slaves to *one* thought still ;”

and that hounds or horses alone would allure me. Be this as it may, although I would ride ten miles around to avoid a Lord Mayor’s show, I would go five times that distance to-morrow to see Shaw ride one good run over Leicestershire. Of course I need not say what Shaw I am speaking of—he who hunted, first Lord Moira’s, next Sir Thomas Mostyn’s, and afterwards the Duke of Rutland’s hounds. There was a something about Shaw that (I know nothing of his pedigree) had every appearance of his being the son of a gentleman. At all events there was a style and manner very uncommon in a menial servant, and his language was strictly in unison ; it was that of an educated man, or at least of one who had mixed much with those who were educated. But his forte was his horsemanship, and in that he really shone. In the first place, he looked the horseman to a nicety, his figure and seat being quite perfect. Then he was so quick, so determined, so fearless, and, withal, so lively in a run, that it must have been a dead soul which did not respond to his. “Gently, gentlemen, if you please,” he would say, when the scent was light and ticklish, or his hounds had been carried beyond it ; “*one moment*, and I’ll thank ye,” with his hand raised above his head, by way of adding force to his words. “Governess has it,” some hard riding gentleman would exclaim, and a few other hounds might score to cry. “Will it do, Shaw ?” the Duke would ask ; “I think *not*, your Grace—I *fear it’s flash*.” Then to see him make his casts when he thought he had a good fox before him ! By heaven, ’twas delightful ! What places he rode at, to take the chance of hitting him ;

what animation in his countenance when he found he had hit him ; and, cap in hand, what a cheering holloa would he give them, to encourage them to settle down to the scent ! But the superiority of this man was shown in the treatment he received from his masters. Sir Thomas Mostyn gave him £300 per annum, and a servant to wait upon him. His place with the Duke was still better ; but I must stop, for I ought only to have spoken of him as a horseman. I may, however, be allowed to say where I last saw him. It was at Stratford-on-Avon, in Lord Middleton's time, where he had a comfortable house and two good hunters, as also the use of Lord Middleton's stud whenever he had occasion for them ; but he was only the wreck of the man I had seen in Leicestershire, having met with the too common fate of mankind—a very severe illness.

In the sequence of degree, and perhaps not much his inferior in horsemanship, came the noted Jack Stevens, many years whipper-in to Mr. Osbaldeston, and since huntsman to Mr. Wilkins, as useful and civil a man as I ever saw in a field. But think of Jack among the big wigs in the Quarterly Review ! Why, we can only exclaim—"who would have thought it ?" although some one says, "every situation in life serves for formation of character ;" and I believe this "somebody" was Paley. Jack Shirley was another great artist in the saddle ; and was a favourite whipper-in of Mr. Smith's, when he hunted Leicestershire ; and now, if I mistake not, both master and man are again in the same country, viz., Hampshire, Shirley, as I hear, living with Sir John Cope. By way of showing of what stuff Shirley's nerves were made, and that it was "like master like man," I shall repeat an anecdote I before related of him. "He was riding an old horse called Gadsby (not much the better for having been many years ridden by his master) over one of the worst fields in Leicestershire for a blown horse—between Tilton and Somerby—abounding with large ant-hills and deep furrows. The old horse was going along at a slapping pace, with his head quite loose, and down hill, whilst Jack was in the act of putting a lash to his whip, *having a large open clasp knife between his teeth at the time !*" Will Staples, late whipper-in to Sir Bellingham Graham, and afterwards huntsman to Sir Rowland Hill's hounds in North Shropshire, was a very clever fellow in a saddle, and so he ought to be. He was got by old Tom Staples once huntsman to Lord Middleton ; brought up from his boyhood by Sir Bellingham, and perfected in his horsemanship by riding his, Sir B.'s, second horse in Leicestershire, when he had his hounds at Quorn. I never saw a man that could follow the turnings and twistings of a hound that wanted to avoid the lash, equal to Will Staples—a certain sign of having the finger.

It too often happens that those who have been much in the "crack countries," as they are termed, are given to hold cheaply what are called cockney

sportsmen *—that is, such as figure in the counties neighbouring to London. I have long since been beaten out of all such absurd prejudices, and I am free to admit that I saw several very superior horsemen in them. Where, for example, could a finer rider be found than *Shock*,† whipper-in to Lord Derby, when I was in Surrey? Indeed he was in one respect superior to Jonathan (the huntsman), inasmuch as he went as well on a young horse as he did on an old one. I considered him a splendid horseman. There was also another man in Surrey who went by the name of *Shock Jem* (his real name being Hezletine), whom I once, and only once, saw with hounds. I have heard many good judges—Mr. Tattersall amongst the number—say that there scarcely ever was this man's equal; a sort of dare-devil that would ride a young and raw horse at a new and high gate, with as much confidence as if he had been on the back of Prosper. He was likewise renowned for breaking horses to harness, and *breaking those which others had given up as incurable*. I heard a person relate the following anecdote of this extraordinary character, of which I had no cause to doubt the truth. On calling at his stables, in the country, to see a hunter which was for sale, my informant espied a horse in the yard, harnessed, and his head borne up to his pad, but he was not tied or confined in any other way. Observing him make a plunge, he had the curiosity to inquire the reason of his being left in that situation. “Oh, sir,” said Shock Jem, “he has been there, as you now see him, two days. He will come to his senses presently, and then I shall be able to drive him.” I did not hear the sequel, but we know that hunger is a great tamer of animals, and no doubt was often resorted to as a cheap instrument in the hands of this *ἵπποδόμος* “Εκτορ. Now why these two men should bear the name of *Shock*, or rather why it should have been given to them, I know not, unless we take the word, as derived by Johnson—“from shag, a rough dog;” and Shock Jem had an uncommon head of hair, curling all over and down the sides in what are called cork-screw ringlets.

There was a gentleman by the name of Shaw, who must not be passed over, for I should think it would be difficult, setting aside Mr. Ongley, to find a man who rode over a country under such appalling difficulties as he laboured under for the last six years that he hunted with Lord Derby's hounds. “Game to the back bone,”

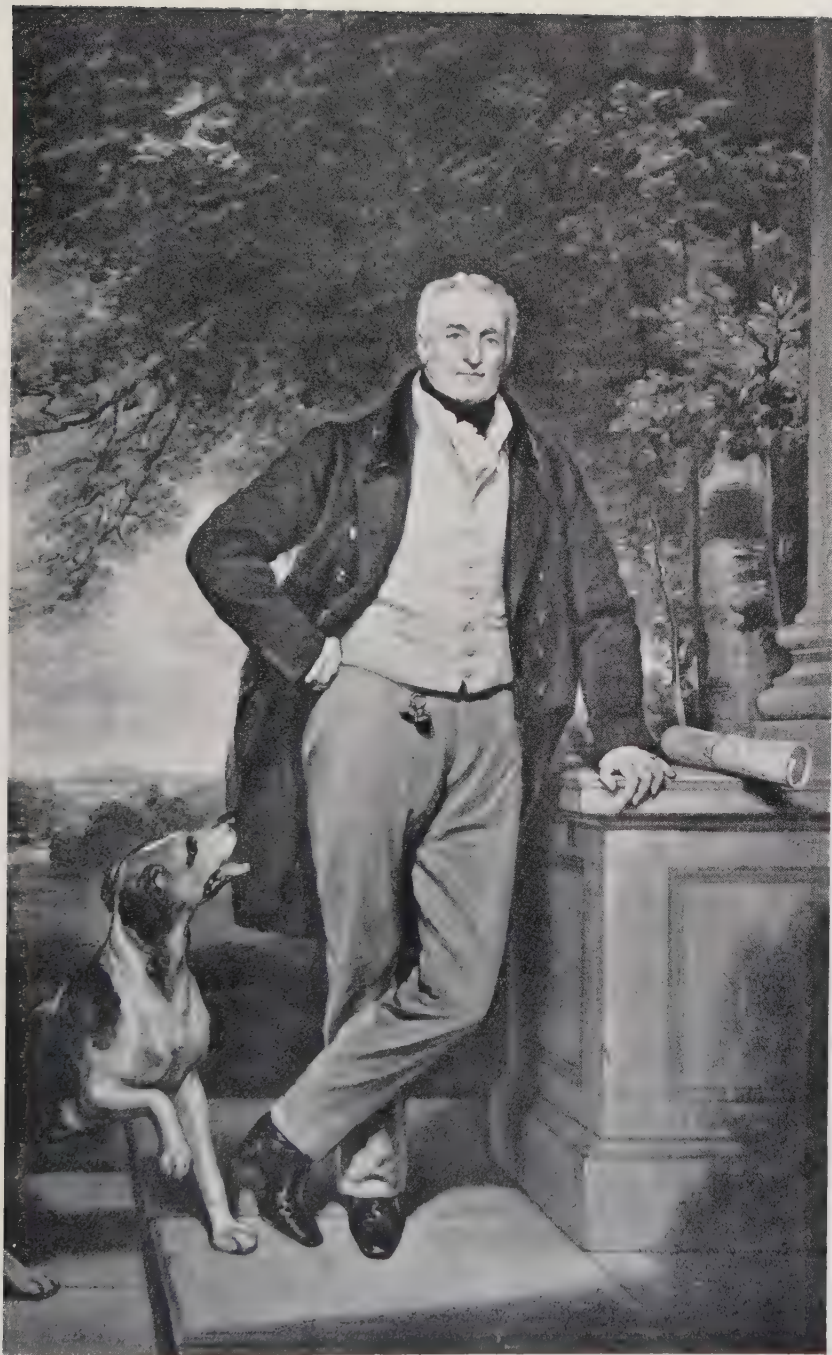
* All those who knew the veteran John Lockley, can vouch for his having been a bundle of prejudices. It so happened that he never but once, and that once late in his life, hunted with hounds in the immediate vicinity of London. “What did you think of the field?” said I to him, expecting something rich. “Why,” he replied, “one half of them seemed to me candidates for the treadmill. If I had been thrown from my horse and he had got loose, I should never have expected to have seen him again.”

† This person's real name was Bullen, and it may be recollected that he went from Lord Derby to hunt a pack of fox-hounds in Scotland.

however, he would not give up, and, although lifted on his horse, and with chalk stones working out of his hands, I have seen him ride as hard as any man in the field. He had a splendid horse, called Comet ; but Mr. Shaw was (for he is gathered to his fathers) a Yorkshireman, and a good judge of the animal. The late Mr. Storey, better known as Jack Storey, was at one time of day very hard to beat over Leicestershire. Indeed, I once saw him show them all the trick on old Cockspinner. Sir Horace St. Paul I remember going brilliantly over Leicestershire, and it was he who gave seven hundred guineas for a horse, once my brother's, called Hermit. Having one day ridden him into convulsions, he was seen by Mr. Loraine Smith opening one of his veins. A humorous caricature soon afterwards appeared, of "an apostle administering comfort to a distressed Hermit." I saw Major St. Paul going well in Yorkshire, and very well mounted.

I must now conclude schedule S with a very good horseman by the name of Sloper, whom I saw with Mr. Warde's hounds in the Craven country ; and I shall never forget his wonderful little mare, not fourteen hands high, *got by a cart-horse out of a thorough-bred mare*, for whom no fence was too high, no day too long, and who, during nine seasons, was never out of her place, which was in the front rank. The smoothness of her action enabled her to do this, but she was a phenomenon in my eyes.





HENRY VILLEBOIS, OF MARHAM HOUSE, NORFOLK,
IN 1842. *From a mezzotint by THOMAS LUPTON after
THOMAS PHILLIPS, R.A. The print lent by Messrs. Fores.*

CHAPTER XII



SHALL commence with a right good Leicestershire grazier—I mean Mr. Thomlin, who lived in the neighbourhood of Lord Lonsdale's hounds, but was a constant attendant on the other packs also, having generally had from six to eight hunters in his stables. Few men sustained a higher character as a rider and a sportsman than Mr. Thomlin and although well enough able to bear the expenses of hunting, he sold several horses for large sums. A few years back, however, he was near being run to ground, for he had one of the worst falls that a man ever recovered from. Nothing daunted, he has been riding as well as ever since, and had not the horse fallen amiss, he was to have ridden Mr. Tollemache's Jerry, once Mr. Assheton Smith's, in the grand Leicestershire steeple-chase.

A song made on a capital run with the Oakley, has the following verse :—

“ See, the Marquis is gallantly charging a stile,
You may guess what a burst it will be by his smile ;
And Whitbread is riding right desperate hard,
Though he well knows the country around, to a yard.”

The Marquis alluded to is the present Duke of Bedford, then master of the Oakley, and one of the best sportsmen of modern days. He was a beautiful horseman, and had his health admitted it, would have been as signal a sportsman as any of his compeers in the field, and particularly well adapted for the mastership of a pack of fox-hounds. That was an unlucky day for Bedfordshire in which his lordship gave them up.

Mr. Thornhill of Oxfordshire was a good rider to hounds, and I understand that his namesake, once the master of the Warwickshire country, was quite an *out-and-outer* !

Cheshire has given birth to two very eminent horsemen—Mr. James Tomkinson of Dorfold Hall, near Nantwich, and Major Tomkinson, his brother. I believe I may say of the former, that he was not only the very crack man of Cheshire

for upwards of twenty-five years, but that there have been but very few better men over a country anywhere. Some years back he made his appearance in Leicestershire, and so brilliantly did he go, that he attracted the notice of the "nobs." It so happened, that the morning being wet, he had a silk handkerchief about his neck, and according to the costume of the Cheshire, was breeched in leather—then the type of a slow one. The red coat also being wanting—my old schoolfellow's colour is *black*—he was not taken for what he is, and was asked by several if he would sell his horse? That not being his object, we may presume he had an answer at hand, although he could not but consider the question as complimentary.* His stud generally consisted of from four to six of the very best sort, money not being a consideration. Major Tomkinson was also a brilliant horseman, but not perhaps so well mounted as his brother.

The West of England produces three very good riders, Imprimis—the well-known George Templar, one of the cleverest sportsmen of the age; and his friend, Mr. Henry Taylor, who officiated as whipper-in to him when I visited his country. He was a surprising man, as the saying is, to get across that awkward country—Devonshire. Mr. Tatchell, once a master of fox-hounds, in Dorsetshire, was quite an out-and-outer, and fit to go into any country. He was nothing short of sixteen stone, but the character he bore was that no man could beat him in Mr. Farquharson's or Mr. Yeatman's hunts. He was singularly fortunate in purchasing a black Sultan horse, out of the Duke of Beaufort's country, *supposed to be a roarer*, which carried him brilliantly several seasons, and I must say I never saw a more complete hunter—up to every difficulty, and fast enough for any hounds. Mr. Tilbury of London is a prime horseman; as well as Dr. Trotter, whom I saw in the North of England. He was well bred to ride, being the son of the very celebrated Mr. Trotter of Staindrop (called by his friends Jack Trotter), who, the late Duke of Cleveland told me, was the best horseman he ever saw in a field. "He has not only," added his Grace, "been a most superior rider over a country, but he has ridden with admirable temper and judgment, and never pressed upon hounds." Though then I believe in his seventy-fifth year, he was still well able and willing to go, and it is not very many seasons back (twelve, I believe), that mounted on one of Mr. Spiers's horses, he led the Lambton hunt, in a very fine run in the Sedgfield country! Well done, threescore years and ten!

I am old enough to remember the celebrated Mr. Vernon—commonly called Harry Vernon—of Hilton, Staffordshire, the great dandy of the last century, and perhaps it is enough to say, that he wore ear-rings. Notwithstanding this, he could ride to hounds, and was an accomplished sportsman—and particularly so,

* He afterwards appeared often in Leicestershire, always going well.

if you believed all he told you. He was in Leicestershire to Mr. Meynell's time. And so was the Hon. Joshua Vanneck, afterwards Lord Huntingfield, and right well he went. He was a steady, good horseman, with what may be called a snug seat on his saddle, and quick enough for anything, when he liked. In short, the circumstances of himself and his "wonderful mare" not being able to live to the end of the Coplow run—immortalized in verse by Mr. Lowth—is produced as one proof of the severity of it. Mr. Frederick Villebois, now at the head of the Craven hounds, is an excellent hand over an awkward country. In a beautiful run of an hour, with Mr. Warde's hounds, I had the pleasure of being led by him over an extremely difficult country, on his old white-nosed horse, and I thought I never witnessed a more workmanlike performance. This was the horse which was never well till he was nine years old, and never ill afterwards.

Mr. Vansittart was in great repute for many years in Leicestershire ; and is one of the figures represented on the snuff-boxes, as going "swish at a rasper." There was a fine horseman in Herefordshire, by the name of Vevers, who was famous for making raw horses into hunters, but was better known on the turf than with hounds. He was, however, a perfect schoolmaster, and I bought one of the most accomplished hunters from him, of his own making (Bolus, the race horse), that was ever taken into a field. I hear a very good account of Mr. Villiers, Lord Jersey's second son, whom I only saw in his boyhood. I shall not, however, forget the fears of Ransom (Lord Jersey's second horse rider, of whom I have before spoken,) that he might lose his taste for hunting, when his father sent him to the Continent. "I have taken a deal of pains with him," said Ransom, "and now they have sent him abroad. What a pity !"

The Rev. John Vennor was one of the best men over Warwickshire in the early part of Mr. Corbet's hunting it. He particularly distinguished himself on a little horse called Hero, which I sold him when in my teens. He was got by Hero, a son of Herod, out of a Welsh pony, but was so restive that no one would venture on him, at thirteen pounds, when four years old. Putting little value on neck or limbs in those days, I became his owner, and after much trouble, his *master* ; but throwing himself down one day in his ill humours, and blemishing himself, I sold him to Mr. Vennor for twenty-eight pounds. He was the sort of animal which we very rarely see—showing a deal of blood, with much bone and great length, although very near the ground, and as stout as steel ; indeed requiring a great deal of work to keep his temper down. In short, he was what was called in the language of the *old* stud book, "a little horse of very high form," and will be remembered in Warwickshire for many years to come.

I shall conclude this list with a very good man for his weight—*good eighteen*

stone—and I am sure Sir Bellingham Graham and Mr. Osbaldeston will confirm what I say of him. I mean Mr. Vaughton, who resides near Coventry, a very thrusting rider.

Now comes the who-whoop—W being my last letter, but it appears to favour hard riders, there being a very long list. I will begin with some of the old ones. The late General Sir Harry Warde—brother to the nonpareil of that name—was one of the clippers of his day both as a horseman and as a sportsman. I well remember seeing him sailing away on his famous horse, *Star*, a *roarer* for which he was offered 500 gs. He was undoubtedly one of the ablest and best riders of his day, and had a remarkable eye to a country. When his brother hunted Northamptonshire, his hounds had a magnificent run from Marston Wood, in Northamptonshire, to Skeffington Park, Leicestershire, where they killed him. The distance, as the crow flies, cannot be less than twenty miles; yet I saw a map of the general's on which *he had marked every parish through which the hounds ran*—and there were many acute angles in their course—*himself being with them to the last*. Mr. Henry Waller, the well-known “Harry Waller”—was an excellent rider for a long series of years, in the Duke of Beaufort's country, although labouring under the disadvantage of deafness. Ditto Mr. Worrall (not deaf) of race-riding celebrity, who long hunted with his Grace. I liked to see Mr. Worrall at work; the position of his hands well worthy of remark and imitation. Mr. Wharton—commonly called “Jerry Wharton”—used to go well over Oxfordshire, in Sir Thomas Mostyn's days, but some years afterwards he divided his time between Yorkshire and Melton. He was a good horseman, and a bruiser over a country.

One of the *strongest* horsemen I knew, was Mr. Reginald Wynniatt, of Guiting Grange, Gloucestershire, well known with all the packs in his part of the world. I have seen a great deal of this gentleman's performance with the Warwickshire, and the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, and although he had not the tender hand of a Worrall or a White, he had that which could lift a horse over, or support him in struggling through rough fences, and deep countries, equal to any man that ever sat in a saddle. Some years back, he particularly distinguished himself in a run with the duke's hounds from Snell Gorse to Woolford Wood, the pace and country being unusually severe. Mr. Wroughton of Wroughton—in the Craven country—was an eminent horseman, and has had experience in better countries than his own. He was among the welters, but was always well mounted.

Perhaps not many of your readers remember the renowned Jacob Wardell in the field, but I do; and I also remember that it took a very good man to beat him over Leicestershire, where he hunted in Meynell's time. In fact, he appears in

the Coplow poem, but not to advantage, having, it seems, not realized on the morrow what he threatened over night. But Mr. Wardell was a horseman, and very good at water, of which he cleared eight yards on his famous grey horse that he sold to the Duke of Rutland for eight hundred guineas. He was likewise a better than common judge of a hunter, and long after he declined hunting his opinion was sought for in London, when large sums were to be given. For my own part it always gave me pleasure to see Jacob Wardell in the field. There was something straight-forward, hard, and business-like in his appearance, and his seat on his horse was sportsmanlike and good. He generally rode with a large hooked stick, instead of a whip, which he carried high in his hand—as if a means of defence—which he found useful in pushing open gates ; and, in fact, the cane-handled whips of modern days were introduced for that purpose. When I knew him in Leicestershire, he was in the spring of life and so was I ; but each may now say—“ *Non sum qualis eram.*”

Mr. Willan—better known in the sporting world as “Jack Willan”—must have a good word here, being a top-sawyer and a heavy weight. I have often lamented that, like Mr. Wardell, he preferred other pursuits to fox-hunting, for I considered him a slashing rider, and I am certain both these gentlemen might have enjoyed hunting *gratis*. But to speak seriously—I consider Mr. Willan a very fine horseman, and I once saw almost the largest and most difficult fence taken by him, on his famous sprig-tail horse, that I ever saw taken by any one. It was one of a peculiar description, and might be produced in proof of the wonderful powers of a horse, *under weight*. There was, first, a brook, then a naked space of ground, quite sufficient for his horse to have alighted upon previously to his taking his second leap at the rails which were beyond it, and which his rider intended him to do. Old sprig-tail, however, was up to trap ; he had *his suspicion* of the ground not being firm enough for himself and his load, so he cleared the whole at one spring ! It must moreover be told, that he was going up hill at the time, and was ridden slowly at the fence, with the expectation of his doubling it, which made the clearing of such space and height, still more remarkable ; and also spoke much for the hand of the rider. It was with the Duke of Beaufort’s hounds, about fifteen years back.

Decidedly the best man Warwickshire ever saw, next to Mr. Robert Canning, was Mr. Henry Wyatt, a native of that sporting county, six feet three inches high—Mr. Canning beat him by an inch—who was chiefly conspicuous in the periods of Lord Middleton and Mr. Shirley hunting that country, although he commenced in Mr. Corbet’s time. A more daring rider than Mr. Wyatt there not only could not be, but there need not be ; for if it were within the powers of his horse to carry him to hounds, there was nothing wanting on his part. I speak of him now

in the past tense, because he has given up hunting ; but it is due to him to say, that a more gallant horseman England never saw. From his pace and weight—fifteen stone—the casualties of his stable were considerable, and every now and then *smashing* was the order of the day. On the other hand, several of his horses stood proof, and of course commanded high prices.* He had, however, a singular piece of ill luck with his famous grey mare, for which he had refused three hundred guineas. She got cast in her box in the night, and was found dead, from a ruptured blood vessel, in the morning. But I cannot quit Mr. Wyatt yet. As my eyes become spell-bound when looking at such a workman as he was—and I saw much of him—so does my pen stick to my fingers, as if unwilling to drop the subject. I could, indeed, dwell for an hour on the scenes I have witnessed in his presence ; and were it not that I might be suspected of a desire to extol myself by sharing his fame, I would relate a few of his master-strokes. I have seen him in all situations with hounds. I have seen him on the wrong side of a large cover, at starting, and I have seen hounds slip away from him owing to other causes. I have known him meet with falls and perplexities, and appear in his place again in a trice, as though he had been dropped from the clouds ; but I never heard of, or saw a good run that, if Henry Wyatt was out, he did not see the best part of it and make his appearance at the finish. Neither shall I ever forget one fence I saw him ride over, after his horse had been going some time. It was a hog-back oaken stile, quite as high as his horse's back, on a narrow slippery footpath, and on a considerable ascent. I certainly did not consider it a practicable fence, situated as it was, and was surprised to see him well landed in the next field. To be sure he was upon a rare bit of stuff—his Morgan Rattler horse, long and wide, but not tall.

In an account in the New Sporting Magazine for March, 1833, of a capital run with Lord Forester's hounds, I observed that the names of the three leading men out of four all began with W ; namely, White, Willerton, and Wing. This Mr. Wing was a famous old sportsman of the late Lord Forester's time. I remember him well ; he was a great grazier, and it was he who followed Lord Forester over the Belvoir brook, when his horse cleared the amazing space of ten yards. The brook itself measured twenty-one feet six inches, in the clear. It was in a run from the noted Jericho cover. The well-known Bill Wright, of Uppingham, who rode Mr. Patrick's mare in the great Leicestershire steeplechase and was so near winning it was in high repute at the same time, and has ever been considered one of the very best men with the Cottesmore hounds. Indeed, at the end of their famous run, some time ago, from Woodwell head to Barkby,

* Mr. Maxse gave him either 300 or 400 guineas for one.

he was said to have taken such a desperate fence near Gaddesby, that he was for some time alone with the hounds. This leads me to the mention of Tom Wingfield, so many years whipper-in at Quorn, and afterwards huntsman to Sir Thomas Mostyn, a horseman of great merit. On that celebrated occasion when Messrs. Smith and Lindow ran away from the field on Jack-o'-Lantern and The Clipper, one man was visible, and only one, and that was Tom Wingfield, who was sinking the wind to reach some earths that were open. Few men could ride better than Tom could before Old Time laid hold of him, and although he himself is fast (*tempus fugit*, says the proverb) he makes others slow. Mr. Whitworth, the Northampton draper, must not be overlooked. He was a good rider, and so was his son. The former once sold a hunter for five hundred guineas, and several others for large prices—a certain test of their having distinguished themselves. There was a very sporting doctor at Shrewsbury, of the name of Wynoe. He weighed heavy and rode hard, so that a bad horse was never long in his stable. He has bred and sold some good ones. I saw a quick yeoman in Holderness—Mr. Watson, of Wandby; and having got so far to the northward, I must not overlook the renowned “Matty Wilkinson,” as they called that good sportsman, who owned the Hurworth hounds. It is all very fine talking of going “best pace *up* wind, with your twelve stone men, with twelve thorough-bred ones in their stables.” It reminds me of “the charms of a cottage,” but of a cottage with a double coach-house. The rest, as Crabbe says, is a phantom. So give me a man who mounts his horse eighteen stone, good weight, as Mr. Wilkinson does, and is able to live with hounds best pace, *down wind*. I followed this gentleman for an hour one day, over a very cramped country, as the term is, and I never saw any one handle a horse better than he did his.

I will now make one more cast into the midland counties. There was a fine rider some ten or twelve years ago in Oxfordshire—I mean Mr. Webb, of Kidding-ton House, well known before in the Old Berkeley hunt. We may put him down as one of the very best going in his part of the world, and I have been pleased to hear some good accounts of his late performance with Mr. Drake's hounds. Barring accidents, he will be “with 'em.” Mr. Wightwick, of Staffordshire, goes well—at least *did* when I last saw him, and he had a capital grey horse which he sold to Sir James Musgrave for three hundred guineas. Colonel Wallace, of the 5th Dragoon Guards was a fine horseman, and thought much of in the North when I was there. One of his stud was picked out at £400 by Lord Kennedy, for the great steeple-chase between himself and Mr. Ross, but he was superseded by Radical. The Colonel had an awful fall when I was in Yorkshire, having been dragged in his stirrup and badly kicked by his horse. When I was in Surrey,

Mr. Edward Woodbridge appeared to me almost the best man in that country. At least he was reputed to be the best in Colonel Jolliffe's hunt. Mr. Richard Williams—better known as Dick Williams—son of the general of that name, was a proper dare-devil over a country, and a very good horseman withal. The last time I saw him was in Warwickshire, about six years ago, when he was going in his usual dread-nought style. But do I not remember seeing his father doing the same thing? To be sure I do, as the hard riding "Harry Williams" of my boyish days, and to whom I looked up with, I fear, more reverence than to any other being, because I had heard he had swam the river Severn, when bank-full, after hounds. General Williams was, however, one of the best, as well as boldest, riders of his day in Shropshire and the counties neighbouring to it.

Mr. John Wormald—much heavier than he looked to be, possessed all the attributes of a horseman. As for nerve, I can only say I was shown a ravine that he had ridden over in Leicestershire, which I think even Mytton might have declined in his *most daring moments*. Had his horse fallen backwards, inevitable destruction of his rider would have been the consequence; but he kept his legs. I also witnessed another proof of nerve in this bold Yorkshireman, when he was visiting Mr. Nicoll, in the New Forest. Getting upon a horse of mine, he exclaimed—"I *wonder* whether Nimrod's horse will jump timber?" and slapped him at a new and high gate, out of a road, which, luckily for his rider, he cleared! His brother Henry I have never seen with hounds, but they both had good studs at Melton.

Mr. Wood, of Brixworth, in Northamptonshire,—a welter weight—was a good man across country, when he liked his horse, and he generally had a first-rater or two. Mr. Waters, the Veterinary Surgeon of Northampton and Clerk of the Course there, was also a very good one across country, and a useful man in the field, having a good eye to what hounds were about.

I have never seen Williamson, the Duke of Buccleuch's huntsman. His namesake Mr. William Williamson, brother to Sir Hedworth,—better known in the North as "Billy Williamson"—out-and-outer. This is the gentleman whom I ventured to call the Ajax of the field when I saw him in Durham. But in one respect he differed from that brave man—he *was not invulnerable*, which he ought to have been, for the desperate manner in which he rode; and I saw him have all his upper teeth knocked out in a fall. I don't wonder at the old Yorkshire farmer telling me, that "nought but an *iron* nag could carry Muster Williamson." John Winter, Mr. Ralph Lambton's huntsman and formerly his pad groom in Leicestershire, had a very fine hand upon a horse, and, though somewhat advanced in life, was still a very good man across a country when I saw him.

The mention of Winter reminds me of two other very celebrated men in the same line—Jack Wood, of the Warwickshire ; and Bob Williams, whipper-in to the late Duke of Cleveland, and previously to Sir Richard Puleston, but commencing his sporting career as whipper-in to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn's harriers—an artist of the first pretensions. But, I fancy I hear you say, "no doubt Bob was famously mounted in the stables of the great Welch Baronet !" Not he, indeed ; Bob's stud would have averaged about £40 a head, being for the most part cat-legged, light-carcassed, bits of blood, either turned out of the racing stable as good for nothing or bought from some neighbouring farmer at the price above quoted. But Bob soon made them fencers if he could make nothing else of them, for he had good courage and a beautiful hand. As a proof of these qualifications, if any friend of the Baronet's had a young horse not quite *au fait*, a request was made that Bob should ride him for a month. On my asking him in Yorkshire how he had come off as to broken bones, &c., he thus answered me, and I know he spoke the truth. "I have broke three ribs on one side," said he, "and two on the other ; both collar bones, *and been scalped*." Now I know the horse * that scalped him, by kicking him on the head after throwing him ; but Bob's description of the accident was rich. "He tumbled me down as we were coming away with our fox," said he, "and kicked me on the head till the skin hung down all over my eyes and face ; and *do you know, sir*, when I got to the doctor, *I fainted for loss of blood ?*" The last sentence was given in a tone indicative of its creating surprise, that a whipper-in could faint. I dare say Bob conceived that fainting was the peculiar accomplishment of a lady. Bob was a great favourite with the Duke, but was obliged to give up his situation as his Grace's first whip, for reasons I need not state ; and when I was at Raby my horses stood at his stables in Staindrop, where he keeps a public house.

There was no finer horseman than Jack Wood—superior, I should say, to Bob Williams, having a more graceful seat and a still lighter hand. In fact Wood rode like a gentleman. But he had also been unlucky, having broken a leg, a thigh, and his collar bone. Perhaps Dick Christian would call all this "something *particular*," although he considered his own fractured leg "nothing particular."

Were this worthy of being called the Temple of Fame, no man would be more entitled to a niche than Major Wyndham, of the Scotch Greys, or "big Wyndham," as he is sometimes styled, to distinguish him from others of his name known in the hunting world. Major Wyndham rode over a country, as he fought at Waterloo, with the courage of a lion ; and, to carry on the parallel, in an account given of a

* A vicious brute, called Valentine, that used to be ridden in winkers. No servant should be put on horses of that description.

run with Lord Lichfield's hounds, in which the writer said "he rode to admiration," he was compared to flying and heavy artillery, bearing every thing before him by his velocity and weight. He was undoubtedly a most wonderful man over a country—quite a Tom Edge, or a Dick Gurney, though I should imagine never so well mounted as either of them has been, which adds a feather to his plume. He was the same man every where, with hounds. He could go well over the grass, as he often proved in Leicestershire. He could struggle through fallows, and he could race over downs—which I saw him doing with the East Sussex hounds, a short time before I left England, and at a slapping pace too. But he was a horseman and a sportsman, and I was greatly pleased with the *general* eulogium passed on him in Nim South's Tour, of 1832. May I be allowed to notice the way in which Major Wyndham buys his horses? Instead of giving £250 for one tried good one—and he could not expect to give less, for his weight and pace—he gave seventy or eighty guineas a piece for three, out of which he is sure to have *one* turn up a trump, and perhaps *two*. Indeed, it *might be three*. I have reason to know that General Henry Wyndham is a prime hand over a country (and he has hunted hounds over one of the roughest in England), but I never saw him in the field, that I am aware of.

Lord Waterford as yet I have not had the happiness of seeing, though, from all accounts, he is quite first rate; and I now conclude my list with two celebrated Meltonians, the Earl of Wilton and Mr. White. Of the former I have seen more in the racing saddle than with hounds; but, having seen him in the field, I am at liberty to speak of what I have observed and heard. His lordship comes under the denomination of a first-rate horseman, and on one or two occasions—particularly in the Duke of Rutland's famous run from Sproxton Thorns—has "out-stripped his fellows." But, as the Quarterly says of Earl Jersey, Earl Wilton "does every thing well," and he may be called the fogleman of the fashions, at Melton. Then comes a fogleman of another description, but one which, *when the pace tells*, not many can get a glimpse of; for, as the song says,

*"White on the right, sir, 'midst the first flight, sir,
Is quite out of sight, sir, of those in the rear."*

Mr. White is now becoming an old Melton resident, having spent at least seventeen or eighteen seasons there, and has invariably been looked upon as a leading man with hounds. Indeed, he may safely be placed amongst the hardest and best riders England ever produced; and, taken in the double capacity of a rider of races and a rider to hounds, is decidedly *the very best*. I consider him the exemplar of horsemen, for he has every requisite attribute. In addition to an elegant seat, he has

fine hands, a quick eye, good temper, and undaunted nerve—despite of the awful falls he has had I am happy to pay this warm tribute to his talents, because it delights me to see a man *excel* in what he undertakes ; and as Hudibras says—

“He who excels in what *we* prize,
Appears a *hero* in our eyes.”

Mr. White's character as a rider to hounds is thus put before us, in a very few words. “He was never out in his life,” says one who has seen much of and well able to judge him, “whether he liked his horse or not, that he did not try to get to hounds.” It will be remembered that this gentleman also once played a duet over the country with Mr. Assheton Smith (as was Lindow's case), every other man being beaten. I allude to the run of nineteen miles, point blank, eight or nine years back, with the Duke of Rutland's hounds, which was commemorated afterwards as “the Belvoir day.”

The letter Y affords me but one solitary name, but that is a good one. I mean Colonel Yates, who used to go so well—and particularly so on his famous stump-tail horse—in the Atherstone country, some years back. He was one of the welters, but a right good man to get to hounds—a first-rate workman, indeed.

I now conclude my HUNTING REMINISCENCES, and hope it may have amused my brother sportsmen. To make a portrait perfect, shades as well as lights should be introduced, and consequently mine is in this respect deficient, for the bright side only is presented. “Comparisons are odious,” says the proverb, and as such have been avoided ; and the negative praise of pretty horsemen, or neat riders, I have for the most part thought proper to withhold, how much soever the mention of such might have swelled my list. A slow man with hounds, how good soever his horsemanship, is little thought of in these days. Quickness is the characteristic of the modern horseman, and I have noticed only a few slow ones. I have also omitted many fast ones, because they have not come under my personal observation ; and so Farewell.

NIMROD.

THE END

